

States take on birthright citizenship; Group set to unveil plan; Ga. lawmaker going 'for information purposes.'

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Body

State lawmakers from **Georgia** and several other **states** are gathering in Washington this week **for** the announcement of a new front opening up in the war over illegal immigration.

They are taking aim at the 14th Amendment, which grants U.S. **citizenship** to children born here even if their parents are in the country illegally. The **lawmakers** disagree with that interpretation, saying illegal immigrants and their children are sapping taxpayer-funded services and attracting more illegal immigrants to the United **States**.

At a news conference scheduled **for** Wednesday morning, the **group plans** to **unveil** model **state** legislation to halt what it calls "the misapplication of the 14th Amendment." Daryl Metcalfe, a Republican **state lawmaker** from Pennsylvania who is leading the effort, declined to discuss specifics before the news conference.

But observers familiar with his **group's** efforts said they could include legislation aimed at withholding **state** benefits and services from children born here to illegal immigrants.

State Sen. Jack Murphy, who is spearheading efforts in **Georgia's** Legislature to crack down on illegal immigration, confirmed he is **planning** to meet Tuesday with Metcalfe and other **state lawmakers** in Washington and attend the news conference Wednesday. Murphy, a Republican co-chairman of a special legislative committee studying illegal immigration, has expressed concerns about **birthright citizenship** in the past. But he said Monday he has not seen the proposed legislation and has not decided whether he will introduce it in **Georgia**. He also indicated the **states** face legal constraints in dealing with the constitutional issue.

"I am **going** up there **for information purposes** only at this time," he said.

Murphy is traveling to Washington at the invitation of Metcalfe, who heads a **group** called **State Legislators for** Legal Immigration. Metcalfe said **lawmakers** from 40 **states** have signed on as members of the **group**.

"Everyone who is coming to the press conference is supportive of the concept of ending the illegal alien invasion and ending the incentives that attract illegal aliens onto our soil," Metcalfe said.

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The heads of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and the Asian American Legal Advocacy Center of **Georgia** said any attempts by the **states** to **take on** the 14th Amendment could meet with costly legal challenges.

"This **state** legislation is strategically a way to push the issue through the Supreme Court," said Helen Kim Ho, executive director of the Asian American Legal Advocacy Center of **Georgia**. "That is **going** to be borne on the taxpayers' backs."

Critics also argue **birthright citizenship** is a federal issue. But Metcalfe said he has consulted constitutional experts and is confident his **plan** is legal. Among the people who are scheduled to attend the news conference Wednesday are John Eastman, who teaches constitutional law at the Chapman University School of Law, and Kris Kobach, Kansas' secretary of **state**-elect and a former Bush administration lawyer who helped draft Arizona's new law aimed at illegal immigration.

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