

S-Comm Deportations Challenged by Ammiano Bill

By Melissa Vargas



Assemblymember Tom Ammiano has introduced the TRUST Act (AB 1081), which provides local governments with an opt-in choice to controversial federal Immigration and Custom's Enforcement Agency's (ICE) Secure Communities deportation program (S-Comm).¹⁷ Currently, AB 1081 has the support of key legislators like Assemblymember Gil Cedillo (D-LA), Bill Monning (D-Carmel), and Senator Leland Yee (D-SF).

"Seven in ten Californians deported under S-Comm had committed no crime or were picked up for minor offenses like traffic violations...the program is ruining trust between immigrant communities and the police." – **Assemblymember**

Tom Ammiano (D-SF)

S-Comm was approved under the Bush Administration, and was described by ICE Director John Morton as "the future to immigration enforcement", because it would "identify and remove the most serious criminal offenders first and foremost."¹⁸ Unfortunately, S-Comm has failed to target the most menacing criminals, and has instead deported a large majority of people who are only guilty of minor offenses or have no criminal records at all. In an anti-immigrant environment (where clones of Arizona's SB 1070 continue to multiply and bolster the political agenda of Republican Tea Party activists), S-Comm provides an official platform for more racial profiling incidents.

"When you are faced with such alarming statistics, you have to stop and think why these people are being taken to jail if they have no history of serious dangerous crimes? The S-Comm program violates the intent of the Sanctuary Ordinance Movement of the 1990's," said Jim Gonzalez, former SF Supervisor, and first author of the landmark Sanctuary City Ordinance (replicated in 60 U.S. cities), which protected immigrant rights without reducing effective law enforcement.

Immigrants are vital to California's economy:¹⁹

- Immigrant, Latino, and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add hundreds of billions of dollars and more than a million jobs to the economy.
- Each year immigrants generally pay \$30 billion in federal taxes, \$5.2 billion in state income taxes, and \$4.6 billion in sales taxes.
- The average immigrant-headed household contributes a net \$2,679 annually to Social Security, which is \$539 more than the average US-born household.
- The 2.5 million undocumented immigrants who live in the state pay \$176 million income taxes, \$735 million in property tax, and \$1.8 billion in sales tax.²⁰

Progressives should support AB 1081, The Trust Act, to ensure that the civil and human rights of immigrants are protected against racial profiling.

"California's different approach to immigration is invaluable to the state's economic and educational future. The Secure Communities Program is a disruption to Latino households that only creates division and economic havoc between our communities." - **Assemblymember Gil Cedillo**

¹⁷ [Momentum Builds for Bill Giving Local Governments the Right to Opt-Out of Troubled S-Comm Immigration Program](#) | Assemblymember Ammiano | April 7, 2011

¹⁸ [US Identifies 111,000 Immigrants with Criminal Records](#) | NY Times | November 12, 2009

¹⁹ [New Americans in the Golden State](#) | Immigration Policy Center | July 2010

²⁰ [Undocumented Immigrants Pay Taxes Too, Group Says](#) | Bay Citizen | April 18, 2011