

Congreso's update on city, state & federal issues affecting the Latino Community – shared with community leaders around PA, staff, and other interested parties.

Important Updates

Federal Investigation of the City of PhiladelphiaPg. 3

The Department of Justice has filed a lawsuit against the City of Philadelphia alleging lack of support for Spanish-speaking voters.

Violence.....Pg. 4

Congreso joins other Latino organizations in fighting the violence prevalent in our community.

****NOTE: NEW UPDATES FOR THE WEEK ARE BOLDED & IN GREEN.****

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Important Dates

• **October 26-28, 2006**

“Nuestro Tiempo es Ahora”, the 11th Annual PSLC conference, further emphasizes PSLC’s commitment to their mission of serving as an alliance of Latino leaders, organizations, community activists, students, and individuals that serves as a statewide institutional catalyst for positive social change and political advancement. See www.pslconline.org for more information.

• **October 31 & November 9, 2006**

The United Way of SE PA is holding ***two forums on strengthening low-income families***. See <http://www.uwsepa.org/media/events.asp?specialeventid=104> for more information. A new policy brief on TANF can be found on the same page.

• **November 4, 2006**

Dash for Democracy 5k Run by Committee of 70: an event to celebrate what democracy means to you. Get out and educate the community on issues that are of concern to the Latino community! Congreso will be hosting a table at the Democracy Expo that day. <http://www.dashfordemocracy.org/>

• **November 7, 2006**

GET OUT AND VOTE!!!! Congreso is joining other Latino partner organizations around Philadelphia to monitor the polls on Election Day. The US Senate and Gubernatorial races are the biggest in the state, followed by US House Reps and State Senators/Representatives. To sign-up to monitor the polls, contact Liz Brown at Committee of 70 at 215-557-3600, ext. 112 or see www.seventy.org to register. One election not to miss!

• **November 10-12, 2006**

The ***National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.*** (NACOPRW) will hold its ***Annual Convention*** in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The convention theme is: Hispanic Women in Leadership and the three C's: Communications, Coordination and Collaboration. For additional information about NACOPRW and to register, please visit the website:www.nacoprw.com.

- **November 18, 2006**

The *Latino Juvenile Justice Network's "Know Your Rights Training"* for youth and interested parents/community members will be held from noon-4pm on this day at Julia de Burgos Elementary School at 4th and Lehigh. If you are interested in keeping our youth from entering the Juvenile Justice system, this training is for you. Call Kristin Shipler at 215.763.8870 x1505 or email shiplerk@congreso.net to participate.

If you have any other information that would be important for Congreso to include, please email the Director of Civic Engagement, Kristin Shipler, at shiplerk@congreso.net. We want to represent and advocate for all issues affecting Latinos in the Greater Philadelphia area.

Congreso's update on city, state & federal issues affecting the Latino Community *In Detail* - NOTE: NEW UPDATES FOR THE WEEK ARE BOLDED & IN GREEN.

LOCAL LEVEL- Current Issues

Federal Investigation of City of Philadelphia

Summary

A federal lawsuit has been filed by the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice against the City of Philadelphia for the alleged lack of support provided to Spanish-speaking voters. Federal observers have been requested to monitor the polls from the November 7th election until elections through 2009.

Congreso's Position

As a non-partisan, community-based organization in the Eastern North Philadelphia community, Congreso de Latinos Unidos has become increasingly involved in strengthening the Latino community through civic engagement. As such, we placed poll observers in the May 2006 primaries through the non-partisan watchdog, Committee of 70, and will do so again November 7th to assist Latino voters with translation, technical support and voter protection of all kinds.

In urban, low income areas, there are historically low rates of civic participation on behalf of community residents, vast language barriers, and situations seen at the polls where voters are influenced and/or intimidated by people who do not have the voters' best interests in mind. As an example of our work, we have coordinated a voter mobilization activity with elderly clients, alongside the City Commissioner's office and the Advancement Project, to reach citizens how to use the voting machines and to know more clearly what their voting rights are as Philadelphia residents. We are supportive of all efforts to make Philadelphia's polling places more welcoming and supportive of Latino voters. Our goal is to increase involvement on the part of Latino citizens, as Latinos need to make their voices heard; they are traditionally underrepresented in electoral civic participation.

Congreso is also a part of the National Council of La Raza's Latino Empowerment and Advocacy Project. Throughout the project, we have registered over 600 voters in 2006, and we continue working on non-partisan voter education, protection and mobilization efforts. Congreso advocates for full protection of Latino voters as outlined in the Voting Rights Act, recently reauthorized in summer 2006.

Congreso's Action

- Congreso is corroborating with the Department of Justice and the City of Philadelphia to the extent that is appropriate and feasible.
- Congreso registered 625 voters in 2006.
- Congreso published, through El Sol newspaper, a GOTV/Voter Guide to encourage Latinos in Pennsylvania to get out to vote! and to educate the Latino community on five primary issues of concern.
- Congreso is holding a "Voter Mobilization Caravana" in conjunction with the PA Department of State, Univision and El Concilio, to once again mobilize Latino voters.
- We will monitor the polls in Ward 19, where Congreso's main office and many staff/clients reside, on November 7th.

STATE LEVEL – Current Issues

Violence

Summary

Congreso joined the Coalition to End Handgun Violence in Pennsylvania and attended a rally (with a bus of 30 Latino partners from the neighborhood – from Lighthouse, APM, Lutheran Settlement House, Temple University and Norris Square Neighborhood Project) in Harrisburg September 26th. This was an effort focused on promoting safer communities on the same day that the State House had a day long session on the subject. It was powerful visiting over 25 legislative offices for members of the House Judiciary Committee and attending the rally and prayer vigil.

There were 3 full days that the legislature dedicated to over 100 pieces of legislation the week of September 26th. Even though these were only ‘straw’ votes (they didn’t actually pass or vote down pieces of legislation; they just gauged general support – with no indication of how each legislator voted), they give us a sense of whether certain pieces of legislation would have a chance at passing. Five example results include:

- HB2877 Gun Sale Registration: 65 votes yes; 111 votes no.
- HB2113 Child Safety Locks: 76 votes yes; 115 votes no.
- HB871 Statewide Limit on Handgun Purchases: 63 votes yes; 130 votes no.
- HB874 Philadelphia Assault Weapons Ban: 57 votes yes; 128 votes no.
- HB764 Statewide Assault Weapons Ban: 63 votes yes; 124 votes no.

The Coalition to End Handgun Violence is a full running group of activists who are going forward with advocating for this issue. Next steps:

- The coalition aims for statewide outreach and support from more community and faith-based organizations outside of Philadelphia.
- Possibly coordinating a daylong working session with leadership around the state to commit to eradicating handgun violence.
- Preparations will begin soon for legislative action after the January inauguration.
- Rep. Dwight Evans recently held more Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia hearings. See <http://phillyblueprint.com/> for more information.

It’s just a beginning for how Latinos in Pennsylvania can demand more attention to curbing, if not eliminating, the violence we witness and experience in our cities. Stay tuned for how to continue *your* involvement.

¡OJO! As highlighted in Important Dates, Congreso and its partners will be holding a “Know Your Rights” training for the Latino Juvenile Justice Network on November 18, 2006. Congreso is the lead convener for the LJJN, which is an NCLR program designed to encourage the participation of Latino community-based organizations (CBOs) in juvenile justice reform issues, including but not limited to the following four “core areas”: disproportionate minority contact (DMC); “adulthood” and “criminalization” of Latino youth, which contributes to differential treatment; anti-gang laws targeting Latino youth and their families; and efforts to increase funding for prevention and treatment programs and other alternatives to incarceration. A community forum conducted May 25, 2006 determined that Congreso’s LJJN will focus on the last core issue: evaluating Community-Based Alternatives to Incarceration.

Congreso’s Position

Violence is devastating our neighborhoods and needs to be eradicated. Congreso is dedicated to curbing violence in Philadelphia and across the state. Additionally, Congreso is committed to providing youth and

families with alternatives to violence: workforce development, after-school programming, domestic violence services and more.

Congreso's Action

- Congreso attended the October 19th Blueprint for a Safer Philadelphia hearing to elaborate on our work in the initiative and to encourage youth to become involved in advocating for themselves.
- Call Kristin Shipler at Congreso at 215.763.8870 x1505 or email shiplerk@congreso.net to join the LJJN and/or to attend the “Know Your Rights” workshop November 18, 2006.
- Call your legislators and see how they voted on the handgun and other anti-violence measures. Encourage your friends/family to do the same. Many of our legislators are up for reelection. We need to make sure they prioritize anti-violence measures during their election campaigns and if/when they return to office after the election. To find your legislators, go to: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/index.cfm> use the find box in the upper right hand corner. Tell them that we need to (as PCCY highlighted in their October e-alert):
 - Stop the flow of illegal handguns now.
 - Enact smarter laws and support more effective law enforcement to curb gun crime.
 - Invest in a peaceful future by expanding opportunities for education and jobs

State-level Immigration

Immigration from a statewide lens

USCIS (US Citizenship and Immigration Services) is now holding quarterly, statewide meetings for immigration providers. The first meeting was Tuesday, October 24th, where providers were given a background on federal government services for immigration providers as well as an opportunity to ask questions and present challenges to the USCIS State and Regional officials. If you are interested in attending and/or learning more about USCIS' work, contact Community Liaison Officer Carol Halstrom at 215.255.4837. She is very interested in learning more about the PA landscape and how immigrants can be better served.

****See the pro- and anti-immigration bill attachments under Federal Immigration Reform! See the Pittsburgh Tribune Review's article on page 13 regarding Pennsylvanians support for anti-immigration legislation in the Commonwealth.****

The Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of the Lehigh Valley and the Hispanic Bar Association of PA provided recommendations and examples, so that Allentown City Councilman Julio Guridy could draft a measure that would defeat the anti-immigrant bill that was being presented by another councilman. The anti-immigration bill that was being proposed in Allentown City Council was calling for the City of Allentown to use its limited financial resources to persecute immigrants rather than violent crime.

It was introduced by Councilman Lou Hershman, and defeated on October 18th, when Councilman Hershman had to withdraw his bill altogether. He hopes to get the 2,500 votes needed to get his measure onto the ballot in April of 2007.

Congreso's Position

Congreso understands the State's frustration, in terms of the stalled immigration reform on the federal level. Much of immigration law is determined at the federal level, though; hence, we need to continue to press for comprehensive reform within our federal government.

In reference to HB 1959, PA's English-only legislation House bill, Congreso advocates for fair and reasonable access to government services. Many immigrants new to the United States do not speak or read English fluently. Providing written documents in languages that people understand provides an opportunity for everyone to participate fully in government and participate in the services afforded to eligible recipients. Congreso values freedom of expression but strongly disagrees with individuals who do not support diversity or multilingualism given the history of our country. Individuals who choose to express their viewpoint against diversity and multilingualism send a message that Pennsylvania is not a multi-cultural state, and is not a welcoming place to international visitors or potential residents.

Congreso's Action

- To avoid from distracting state government with pieces of legislation that need to be passed on a federal level, Congreso encourages:
 1. calling State Senators to advocate for immigrant & Latino rights for all residents of Pennsylvania. <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>
 2. doing the same by calling or faxing House Representatives at their home offices at <http://www.house.state.pa.us/index.cfm>

The message that we want to send is that immigration reform is a federal issue. State legislators need to call their US Senators and Representatives to insist on comprehensive reform.

FEDERAL LEVEL Current Issues

Federal Immigration Reform

Summary

Good news! Pro-immigrant resolutions are passing almost at the same rate as anti-immigrant resolutions around the country. Many cities have even defeated measures negative to the immigrant community. As a way to push our pro-immigrant and pro-comprehensive immigration reform agenda, please consider finding a city council member to introduce one of these measures.

http://www.cirnow.org/content/en/proimmigrant_resolutions.htm

PRLDEF has listed all of the anti-immigrant ordinances and their status levels on their website:

<http://prldef.org.bcentralhost.com/Civil/Latino%20Justice%20Campaign.htm>

Congress finished its session before campaigning for the November 7th elections with one immigration bill passed and was signed by the President, the Secure Fence Act H.R. 6061, introduced in the House by Peter King (R-NY) on September 13, 2006. On September 14, 2006, the House passed the Secure Fence Act by a vote of 283 to 138. This bill calls for 700 miles of fence on the U.S./Mexico border and requires DHS to achieve “operational control” of the rest of the U.S./Mexico border through a “virtual fence.”

Former PA Governor Tom Ridge, provided interesting commentary in the Washington Times about his views on federal immigration reform: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/commentary/20060909-101231-7134r.htm>

NCLR has provided its affiliates with talking points to use when talking to legislators about immigration reform. The talking points are attached to this update, for your information.

Congreso's Position

Congreso opposes Anti-immigrant enforcement-only proposals like the ones voted on recently, the Sensenbrenner-King (HR 4437) and the Pence-Hutchison compromise because we advocate that the final bill for comprehensive immigration reform includes:

- A means for the 12 million undocumented to earn legal status and citizenship
- A legal way for new workers to work in the United States
- A removal of delays that keep family members apart for years
- Targeted and effective enforcement that respects humanness and liberty of expression
- Discouragement of local police enforcement of federal immigration laws
- Inclusion of due process, and
- Exclusion of indefinite detention.
- We must ensure protection for immigrant victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault, or trafficking. The current bill will cut these victims off from immigration relief created by the Violence Against Women Act 12 years ago.

Congreso's Action

- **Pay attention to candidate's stand on immigration reform. The Congreso GOTV/Voter Guide pointedly asked candidates Bob Casey, Rick Santorum, Ed Rendell and Lynn Swann about their views on immigration reform. Let this information inform you when casting your ballot on November 7th.**
- **Additionally, make sure to find out from your State Reps & State Senators (<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/index.cfm>) and US Representatives (www.house.gov) where they stand on the issue, as all Representatives, State and Federal and many State Senators are up for re-election in November!**
- **We need to ensure that Senator Specter – (202) 224-4254 will stay behind comprehensive reform.**

- * Please continue your support of a Comprehensive approach to immigration reform**
- *Please vote against any other enforcement only immigration bills that are brought to the Senate floor.**
- * Reject attempts to attach enforcement only immigration amendments to any appropriations bill. We should not allow piecemeal immigration policy to be attached to spending bills.**
- Continue discussions on the issue. Join the National White Ribbon Campaign for Dialogue, as Congreso has, to promote constructive dialogue on immigration reform: <http://whiteribbon.org/>

Mid-Term Elections & the Voter ID Bill

Summary

A study was recently released by The Common Cause Education Fund on the "progress" between 2004 and 2006 on election reforms. One of the states highlighted is Pennsylvania. <http://www.commoncause.org/site/pp.asp?c=dkLNK1MQIwG&b=2128915>

Congreso & Voter Registration, Education & Mobilization

Yes, the elections are fast approaching, and Congreso was very involved in voter registration. Now our efforts are focused on education, protection and mobilization. We are building information about the mid-term elections into our programmatic work; educating our staff and clients in our classes, events and meetings.

Please contact Kristin Shipler at Congreso at shiplerk@congreso.net or 215.763.8870 x1505 to receive a copy of our GOTV/Voter Guide, which includes candidate survey responses from the Gubernatorial and Senatorial candidates.

Voter ID Bill

In late September, the House of Representatives passed the "Voter ID Bill" H.R. 4844, the Federal Election Integrity Act of 2006. The VOTER ID bill aims to mandate new ID requirements on all voters in federal elections. The provisions on the bill would require an individual to present a government issued photo ID in order to cast a ballot, require anyone other than overseas active military personnel to include with their absentee ballot a copy of a current and valid government-issued photo ID, and burden citizens to pay for documents to confirm they are U.S citizens. The original bill, introduced by Rep. Hyde, would have also required proof of citizenship at time of registration. The substitute bill, offered by Rep. Ehlers and voted on by the House, requires that voters present proof of citizenship in order to obtain their photo ID (similar to REAL ID).

This poses a problem for the elderly, for example, who may have been born at home and do not have a birth certificate. People living in poverty are the least likely to have documents to prove they are U.S. citizens. Hundreds of organizations around the country, including MALDEF, AFL-CIO, AARP, NCLR, NALEO, Congressional Hispanic Caucus and the Hispanic National Bar Association are fighting against this legislation.

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus sees it as a retaliation measure against the protections secured in the Voting Right Act (HR9), that was passed unanimously earlier this year.

Youth Vote

Learn more about the youth vote, as it is critical for them to decide the direction in which they want government to move in the future:

http://www.civicyouth.org/research/products/quick_facts_youth_voters2006.htm There are 1.9 million citizens under 30 who are eligible to vote in Pennsylvania. In 2002, the last mid-term election year, only 21% of those eligible came out to vote. Encourage a change with your youth populations. 5.7% of Pennsylvanians are Latino citizens, and they're the ones who are eligible to vote. That's over 100,000 voters!

Congreso's Position

In terms of HR 4844, millions of US citizens, who do not have the identification and proof of citizenship that the bill requires -- the elderly, the disabled, and Latinos in general, will be negatively impacted by this legislation. H.R. 4844 will do far more to suppress turnout and intimidate voters than to prevent voter fraud, as the proponents of the Voter ID bill claim. Millions of Americans will be denied their right to vote because the House of Representatives is addressing a problem that does not really exist.

Congreso's mission is "Strengthening Latino Communities", as such civic engagement is an important part of

that. We strongly encourage all community members that we work with to register to vote. We want stronger communities and recognize that exercise your right to vote gets us one step closer.

Congreso's Action

- Call our Senators Santorum and Specter to encourage them NOT to support a Voter ID bill that requires proof of citizenship. It will further disenfranchise the Latino community and provide unnecessary hardships to our citizens who are secured the right to vote.
 - We are registering voters at Congreso and within the broader community.
 - Congreso partnered with the Advancement Project, Women Vote PA, El Concilio and PICC to forward a voting rights poster to the Philadelphia City Commissioners in English and Spanish to be used by poll workers and voters on Election Day. **A success - The City is likely posting the information the Voting Rights Poster on November 7th!**
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Newsworthy

1. **Congreso's own Nick Torres has been identified as one of 101 people that make Philadelphia work.** Congreso is proud that former staff, Alba Martinez and Varsovia Fernandez and former Board Member Pedro Ramos were also named. See The full article will be available on the Web for a limited time: <http://www.philly.com/mld/dailynews/news/local/15757873.htm>
2. In October 2006, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, in conjunction with the American Psychological Association, The National Women's Health Resource Center, and the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, released a special report on **Hispanics and stress in America**. The research finds that while Hispanics manage their stress with healthier behavior than the general population, stress is still a major health concern for Hispanic Americans. You can visit their website to download the memo and PowerPoint presentation: <http://gqrr.com/index.php?ID=1800>
3. In early October, UWSEPA hosted a forum called the "School Readiness Indicators Forum." The forum provided the opportunity for the **PA Partnerships for Children (PPC)** to present their 2nd annual **School Readiness Indicators** report to the greater Philadelphia community. See the United Way's summary of the PPC work, specific to the five-county region at <http://www.uwsepa.org/>. For the full report, see the PPC web site at <http://www.papartnerships.org/>
4. We haven't even voted in the Mid-term elections yet, and there's already a lot of movement around voting for our next mayor in 2007. See the "**Next Mayor Project**" to hear what Philadelphians care about and to learn about the candidates. <http://www.thenextmayor.com/1keystone.html>
5. New Census data, released August 30, 2006, reveals that **1 out of 4 Philadelphians live in poverty**. The national poverty threshold for a family of four in 2005 was \$19,971. Congreso's clients, on average, earn \$14,000 per year. In general, Philadelphia had the third-lowest median income of cities its size - \$32,573. That was 4 percent less than in 2002, taking inflation into account. Pennsylvania's median household income of \$44,537, ranked 25th among the states. New Jersey has the highest median income, at \$61,672, but Camden earned a median of just \$18,007, the lowest of any city its size. Across the US (the richest country in the world), in 2005, poverty is the reality for 37 million people, over 10% of the overall US population. 17.1% of children in PA live in poverty, up almost 5% in the last four years. The US average is 17.7%, so PA falls slightly below the national average in terms of children living in poverty.
6. **The Children's Advocacy Project** has a helpful, statewide website, www.cap4kids.org, which can help you navigate services for children where you live. It is now translatable into many languages, including **Spanish**. Just go to the site, look under the "How to Use This Site", on the web's home page, and you will see the red and yellow flag of Spain. Click on the flag, and it will translate the website for you in seconds.
7. View the new Pew Hispanic Center's 2006 **National Survey of Latinos – The Immigration Debate**: <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=68>. This report highlights the discrimination that all Latinos are feeling as a result of the negativity and divisiveness resulting from the immigration debate in the United States.
8. Read NCLR's new 20 Frequently Asked Questions about **Hispanics in the US**: http://www.nclr.org/files/1466_file_FreqAskedQuests_6_06_FNL.pdf

Important Links

GOVERNMENT

- US Senator Specter <http://specter.senate.gov/>
- US Senator Santorum <http://santorum.senate.gov/public/>
- US House of Representatives <http://www.house.gov/>
- PA General Assembly <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/index.cfm>
- Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs (GACLA)
<http://www.gacla.state.pa.us/gacla/site/default.asp>
 - **October 2006 Edition of Boletín Latino (*highlighting Congreso's work in Domestic Violence*)** http://www.gacla.state.pa.us/gacla/lib/gacla/el_boletin_latino_oct_2006.pdf
- Philadelphia City Council <http://www.phila.gov/citycouncil/index.html>
- US Citizenship and Immigration Services <http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/index.htm>

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- National Council of La Raza (Latino advocacy) www.nclr.org
- National Immigration Forum (national immigration issues) <http://www.immigrationforum.org/>
- Pew Hispanic Center (Latino research & statistics) <http://pewhispanic.org/>
- We Are America Alliance (Federal immigration reform) www.weareamericaalliance.org
- Committee of Seventy (Philadelphia-based electoral information) www.seventy.org
- The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (fiscal policy and public programs that affect low- and moderate-income families and individuals) www.cbpp.org



Pa. poll finds support for local immigration laws

By David M. Brown
TRIBUNE-REVIEW
Monday, October 23, 2006

Pennsylvanians strongly support local laws that crack down on illegal immigrants, such as controversial ordinances recently enacted in Hazleton, Luzerne County, a new statewide poll shows.

Sixty-five percent of those polled support Hazleton's action -- designed to make the Eastern Pennsylvania community "the toughest place on illegal immigrants in America," according to its mayor -- and nearly two out of three (63 percent) say they would back similar laws in their communities, the survey conducted by Susquehanna Polling and Research found.

About 78 percent of Pittsburgh-area residents supported the law -- the strongest support of any region in the state.

"The poll just really emphasizes the fact that other communities believe the same thing: that the federal government can't or won't solve this problem," said Hazleton Mayor Lou Barletta, who has been in the national spotlight since proposing his get-tough policy this summer.

"We welcome legal immigrants, but illegal aliens are not welcome in Hazleton," said Barletta, 50, the grandson of an immigrant.

Several other Pennsylvania communities have adopted laws patterned after Hazleton's, including Altoona, a city of about 47,000 in Blair County.

Susquehanna Polling, based in Harrisburg, will release the survey results today in conjunction with a speech by Barletta at the monthly luncheon of the Pennsylvania Press Club in the state capital.

Hazleton's law aims to pressure illegals by punishing companies that hire them and landlords who rent to them. Adopted by Hazleton City Council in July, the law is scheduled to be enforced starting Nov. 1.

Barletta, a Republican, said Hazleton adopted the law in response to increased crime and a drain on municipal and school district resources that officials attributed to an influx of undocumented aliens. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates Hazleton's population at 21,100, but the mayor maintains the population has swollen to 31,000 residents, many of them illegal immigrants.

"Our police department is strained beyond its capability," Barletta said. "Most of the high-profile crimes we've experienced have been committed by illegal aliens, and gang activity is on the rise."

Altoona City Council in September voted 6-1 to adopt the "Undocumented Alien Control Ordinance," which is based on Hazleton's law.

Since the Hazleton vote, more than a half-dozen communities in Eastern Pennsylvania have passed or considered similar crackdowns on illegal immigrants, as have a number of municipalities nationwide.

Critics call the Hazleton law "mean-spirited" and inflammatory.

The American Civil Liberties Union and other civil rights groups filed a federal lawsuit claiming Hazleton's law is unconstitutional. The case is likely to go to the U.S. Supreme Court, legal experts say.

"We're not defending illegal immigration. This is about whether Hazleton's law respects the rights of all immigrants," said Witold "Vic" Walczak, legal director of the ACLU of Pennsylvania.

The law oversteps federal authority to regulate immigration, the lawsuit maintains.

Walczak said it also "makes anyone who looks or sounds foreign a suspect" and promotes discrimination.

In the poll, 47 percent of participants say they would strongly support similar laws to Hazleton's in their communities and 16 percent somewhat support the idea. Thirty-two percent oppose such laws and 5 percent were undecided.

The telephone poll of 700 likely voters was conducted Oct. 1-6. It has an error factor of plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Hazleton's law is made up of three ordinances. One provides for fines of \$1,000 a day for landlords who rent to illegal immigrants. Firms that employ undocumented workers risk losing their business licenses for five years. Another ordinance declares English the city's official language.

The poll shows broad-based support among diverse groups and regions, said Jim Lee, who conducted the poll. About 78 percent of Republicans favor the law, as do 57 percent of Democrats. Support was about even among men (67 percent) and women (64 percent).

A majority of voters in all regions of the state except Philadelphia support such laws. Philadelphia voters opposed the measure, 55 percent to 43 percent.

Lee said the poll shows "communities around the state are looking for ways to take the power into their own hands to restore local control" over decisions that keep illegal immigrants out.

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