

July 7, 2010



RE: *Protest of Arizona SB 1070*

Dear Bloomington Constituents,

On May 5, 2010 at a regular session of the Bloomington Common Council, a young man approached the podium to make public comment about Arizona legislation, SB 1070. He remarked about the lack of outcry from this diverse community and suggested that the Council take action along with other cities expressing disapproval of the law and starting boycotts of Arizona products. This young man urged the Council to take a stand against racist laws in other parts of the country to assure constituents that such laws wouldn't be tolerated here in Bloomington.

After thoughtful deliberation and research into the Arizona law, my Democratic colleagues on the City Council along with City Clerk, Regina Moore, and Mayor Mark Krusan, sent a letter of strong protest to Governor Jan Brewer on May 17, 2010. In so doing, we joined a number of city entities and organizations expressing widespread condemnation of this law on the grounds that it oversteps its boundaries with regard to Federal immigration law. We share the opinion with other civil rights advocates that this law necessitates racial profiling, and it moves the State toward a type of fear-based enforcement that should not get a foothold in Arizona or any other state in this great nation. America is guided by the Constitution which provides equal protection for all citizens and all law-abiding people who seek safe harbor and opportunity in the United States of America.

The well-publicized outcry over our letter protesting the Arizona law has proved to be an interesting mix of angry racist threats and thoughtful community support. The most vocal critics have called us many things, including lawbreakers, white-hating traitors, childish, crazy, publicity-seeking fools, and worse! Some letters did not even bother to veil their racist opinions and were quite disturbing. Others, while more tempered in tone and words, did not hesitate to criticize the boycott aspect of our protest and accused us of recklessness because of the potential for a hate-driven backlash to the boycott.

The local press headlined that our action had "backfired" without fully exploring all sides of the complicated issue and the clear need for reform of Federal immigration policy. Further adding to the media circus, on June 17 we received a letter from 16 Republican Indiana State Senators, led by Mike Delph of Carmel, District 29, urging us to step away from our position and rescind our protest of Arizona SB 1070. It appears that these Indiana legislators support the Arizona law as an appropriate way to address the issue of immigration. To these state legislators: we respectfully disagree and will stand by our letter of protest. We strongly oppose the Arizona legislation because we do not want to see similar immigration law proposed here in Indiana.

Lately we are receiving a growing number of supportive letters and calls from our constituents and other individuals who understand the dangerous ramifications of this renegade Arizona law. SB 1070 goes

into effect at the end of July unless the pleas for civil rights and justice are heard and injunctions to stop this problematic legislation are successful. To those thoughtful constituents who quietly but steadfastly support our action, thank you! Your words of encouragement have been a breath of fresh air in an otherwise unpleasant stench of public backlash and hateful anonymous blogging. All of us look forward to a civil and ongoing discussion about the clear need for Federal immigration reform that is comprehensive, humane and constitutional. We thank President Obama and Attorney General Holder for their civil rights leadership and the recent legal injunction to stop this state law from going into effect.

I join the Congressional Progressive Caucus in encouraging all of Congress to address the issue of immigration. I quote from their letter to President Obama of June 15, 2010:

“The need to address this issue has become especially apparent in light of recent events in Arizona. SB 1070 is symptomatic of the frustration all Americans feel toward Congress’ inaction. If we do not respond immediately, other states will follow in Arizona’s footsteps by passing similarly misguided laws. These enforcement-only approaches are unworkable in reality and often have a pernicious effect on vulnerable immigrant communities. The problems with our broken immigration system cannot simply be enforced away, nor can they be solved at the state level. Immigration is inherently a Federal issue and only Congress can pass comprehensive reform, which is the only way to truly secure our borders. A comprehensive solution would deter illegal immigration, ensure effective and humane enforcement and promote legal immigration that will protect and fortify our nation’s economic and national security.”

And with that I continue to focus on the best interests of the citizens of Bloomington, a job that every single member of the Bloomington City Council attends to with integrity and diligence. In the month of July, we will be working to approve the 2011 budget. Throughout the year we plan for and look forward to a healthy future for this vibrant and generous community. It is a privilege to be a public servant in this diverse city filled with thoughtful and active citizens!

Respectfully,

Susan Sandberg

Bloomington City Council At-Large and Vice Chair, Democratic Women’s Caucus