



Advertisement



{extra credit sweepstakes}

Get a chance to win **\$20,000** for college.
+
Check out the Parent Survival Guide.



ENTER
AND SEE RULES



ticket

TEAM FAN SHOP



CLICK HERE TO SHOP

HOME › NEWS › GOVERNMENT

Four immigrant bills signed

Four measures aimed at stanching influx of illegals

By Myung Oak Kim, Rocky Mountain News
May 31, 2006

Gov. Bill Owens signed into law Tuesday four bills that signal Colorado's entry into the effort to stem the flow of illegal immigrants.

The bills, among other things, crack down on people who smuggle illegal immigrants across the U.S. border, and they impose stiff fines on forgers of phony documents used to gain employment.

Those bills join one signed by Owens earlier that directs police to inform immigration officials if a person arrested for crimes other than domestic violence or minor traffic violations is a suspected illegal immigrant.

Owens is expected to sign two remaining immigration bills in the next week.

His actions cap a legislative session in which illegal immigration emerged as a dominant and contentious issue.

Republicans initially proposed a get-tough package of about a dozen bills that was largely rejected by the Democratic majority. That prompted Republicans to blame Democrats for refusing to confront the problem.

But in the end, the legislature came together on the most substantive body of bills in recent years - some Republican, some Democrat.

The package reflects a growing concern about illegal immigration and frustration with Congress for failing to pass reform measures.

"Clearly, illegal immigration is one of the most serious issues facing our country, and that's why this legislation is so important," Owens said. "The number of illegal immigrants living in Colorado is growing exponentially, and many of the issues and impacts have to be dealt with at the state level.

"However, as I have said on a number of occasions, individual states cannot solve the overall problem. The heavy lifting must be done at our nation's Capitol, and I think most people understand that."

House Speaker Andrew Romanoff, D-Denver, touted the work of the General Assembly.

"I think the package that we produced with bipartisan support is one that we can be proud of," he said.



Linda McConnell © News

Rep. Judy Solano, D-Adams County, indicates to her grandson, Jaden Solano, 3, that he should be quiet while Gov. Bill Owens speaks Tuesday in the west foyer at the state Capitol. Owens signed a number of bills Tuesday, including four that attempt to deal with the state's growing population of illegal immigrants.

STORY TOOLS

[Email this story](#) | [Print](#)

RELATED STORIES

- > [New law aimed at sex predators](#)
- > [Owens signs anti-crime bills into law](#)

Subscribe |

LOCAL

STATE

GOVERNMENT

Select a section

Full list of sections

VIDEO

SPECIAL

At news

MOST VIEWED

- > [Lawmakers](#)
- > [Broncos sign](#)
- > [Found after](#)
- > [Boy's mom](#)
- > [Heat in ker](#)

ADVERTISEMENT

Competent
Handelont
members for
www.Handel

Want to start
Check out the
by Jai Bains
Restoration

SPONSORED

- > [Travel Agency](#)
- > [Denver Local](#)
- > [Fish Oil](#)
- > [Cash Aid](#)
- > [Luxury D](#)

Estate
 > Buy Elec
 Compon
 > Compare
 > Baby Be

"Democrats and Republicans agreed this year on three points. First, that illegal immigration is a significant problem. Second, that the pace of reform in Washington is not satisfactory. And third, that states don't have to wait - that there are some things that states can do."

Sen. Tom Wiens, R-Castle Rock, who sponsored two of the bills signed by Owens, said the mood in the legislature changed in the midst of the session.

Wiens contends that Democrats scheduled a one-day hearing on about a dozen Republican-sponsored immigration measures with the intent of killing all of them. Democratic leaders said the Republican measures were unconstitutional, too expensive or mean-spirited.

But anger over the Democrats' action, plus the debate stirred by the massive pro-immigration marches and rallies, pushed lawmakers into a serious bipartisan effort.

"Then we had some real honest discussions between Democrats and Republicans on this issue," he said.

Rep. Dave Schultheis, R-Colorado Springs, who sponsored several of the early measures that were killed, gave a lukewarm assessment of the session's work on immigration.

"I'd give it a 2, as opposed to a 10," he said. "I want to see something happen in Colorado that's going to make a significant difference. None of those bills really is doing it to a major degree, which is the sad part.

"The good part is we're doing something, which is more than we've done before."

These are the bills signed into law Tuesday:


- Senate Bill 110, sponsored by Wiens, creates a \$50,000 civil fine for making counterfeit identification documents and pays for one full-time investigator in the attorney general's office. Revenues from fines would go to immigration enforcement. It takes effect immediately.
- Senate Bill 206, sponsored by Groff, makes human smuggling - sneaking an illegal immigrant into the country - a state felony. It takes effect immediately.
- Senate Bill 207, sponsored by Sen. Peter Groff, D-Denver, makes human trafficking - selling adults into indentured servitude or prostitution - a state felony. It takes effect immediately.
- House Bill 1306, sponsored by Rep. Matt Knoedler, R-Lakewood, requires an audit of the 2003 law that restricts the use of foreign identification papers, including Mexico's matricula consular card. That report is expected in conjunction with an audit of a federal ID law that isn't due for two more years.

Lawmakers said they expect the legislature to pass more immigration measures next session.

"The issue is going to be with us for a long time," Wiens said.


kimm@RockyMountainNews.com or 303-892-2361

ARCHIVE | ABOUT US | CONTACT US | RSS FEEDS | FAQ | SUBSCRIBE
 SITE MAP | PHOTO REPRINTS | CORRECTIONS



**Strasburg is a breath of fresh
 A genuine small town!**

Just minutes from the work centers
 of Metro Denver.


 PAULS HON