



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
THE SENATE
COLUMBIA

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September 26, 2007

The Honorable Jim Ritchie
Chairman, Immigration Task Force
608 Gressette Building
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Senator Ritchie:

Thank you for working on the immigration issue and exercising your skills to get a reform package through the South Carolina Senate. Sadly, there has not been quick action across the hall. This frustration is overshadowed by the lack of action in Washington on this subject, and because of the serious predicament that our state is in.

As you are aware, the problem of illegal immigration is one that has reached a boiling point. The fact is that illegal immigration, coupled with our nation's inability to control our borders, poses a very serious security risk for our citizens in every state. Illegal immigration has financial ramifications as well. *The State* newspaper recently posted a headline that wages of South Carolinians were falling because of illegal immigrants in the work force. There are also the costs that have to be absorbed by our taxpayers in providing health care and education to illegal immigrants. Additionally, when state law enforcement officers detain violators and contact federal authorities, often there is little or no action, leaving state authorities the option of releasing violators back into our communities or using taxpayer funds to incarcerate the offender. Although the federal government has mandated these costs, the onus falls on our citizens to pay for such services.

Unfortunately, the ability of the state to deal with this problem is almost entirely taken away by the provisions of our Constitution that leave immigration law solely within the province of the federal government. However, Congress has refused or is incapable of acting, thereby leaving the states in the position of burning while Congress

fiddles. Because of that scenario and because of the enormous impact that this problem has on our state, I have drafted a resolution and am preparing to introduce it at the first opportunity that would call for a constitutional convention for the sole purpose of giving state governments the ability to address the illegal immigration issue.

This resolution, if approved by two-thirds of the other states, would require Congress to call for a constitutional convention. The issue presented to the constitutional convention would be straightforward. States would be given the ability to give or deny benefits to illegal immigrants, as well as the ability to enforce federal immigration laws within their borders. The states would also be given the ability to apprehend and expel violators and would force the federal government to provide timely assistance with their expulsion. In short, the constitutional amendment would say that if Congress refuses to act, then states would have the ability to act in order to protect themselves and their pocketbooks. I have attached a copy of the resolution for your review.

While this course of action is unprecedented, I also believe that the danger facing our country is unprecedented. We need to act now. If we are unsuccessful, at least we can say we tried and that we sounded a clarion call for action. I hope that Congress will act, but if it continues to be politics as usual in Washington, then the states would have an opportunity to look out for themselves.

I would ask that the Immigration Task Force that you are chairing look into this as an additional concept at the meetings you are having across the state. Thank you for your attention to this matter. If I can provide additional information, please contact my chief of staff, John Hazzard, or me. I look forward to hearing from you soon. With warmest personal regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Glenn F. McConnell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Glenn" being particularly prominent.

Glenn F. McConnell

Attachment