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[Five Deal-Breakers in Arizona's New Immigration Law](#)

Miami Herald columnist [Andres Oppenheimer](#) has an interesting take on the new anti-immigrant bill passed in Arizona. Here are excerpts from his column:

Now that Arizona has enacted the most xenophobic anti-immigration law in this country, get ready for the big Hispanic exodus.

But it won't be an exodus back to Mexico or to Central America. It will be a stampede toward Miami, Los Angeles, Chicago and other cities with huge Hispanic populations, where Latinos will be able to live without fear of being stopped by police because of the color of their skin or for speaking Spanish.

According to a bill passed by the Arizona legislature and signed into law Friday, police officers would have to arrest anyone when they have "reasonable suspicion" that the person does not have valid immigration papers. And it would allow anyone to sue local or state officials who they believe aren't carrying out the law.

There are five major reasons why this Nazi-era-reminiscent legislation should be stopped in Arizona and kept from being copied by other states.

First, it won't stop undocumented immigrants from coming to the United States. As long as the U.S. per capita income is more than three times higher than Mexico's -- \$46,400 vs. \$13,500, to be precise -- Mexicans and other Latin Americans will continue crossing the border one way or another.

Second, it will not make Arizona safer. On the contrary, it will divert police resources away from fighting crime and will compel undocumented immigrants -- as well as U.S.-born Hispanics who won't want to be hassled by police -- not to report crimes.

But the Arizona Police Chiefs Association and others opposed the measure, saying it will drain law enforcement resources and prevent witnesses from stepping forward. By the same token, U.S. authorities in 2007 publicly honored 26-year-old undocumented immigrant Manuel Jesus Cordova for rescuing a 9-year-old whose mother had died in an accident. Would Cordova do so under the new law?

Third, it will hurt Arizona's economy. The new law is likely to be struck down by the courts as unconstitutional, but only after long and costly legal battles.

In addition, a flight of many of the estimated 470,000 undocumented Latinos from Arizona and the closing of some of the more than 35,000 Hispanic-owned businesses in the state will drain the state's already ailing finances.

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Fourth, if more U.S. states follow Arizona's lead, there may be a Latin American tourism backlash. Many of the more than 13 million Mexicans, 2.5 million South Americans and 860,000 Central Americans who travel to the United States every year may think twice before visiting a country where they may be stopped by police just because of the color of their skin or the language they speak.

Fifth, and perhaps most important, the law is morally wrong and profoundly un-American. The United States, despite the decline of its international image immediately after the Iraq War, is once again being seen positively by a majority of countries, according to a BBC poll released last week. Racial profiling laws would no doubt hurt the U.S. image abroad.

My opinion: Arizona's new law is not only legally dubious, economically counterproductive and morally repugnant, but it will do nothing to solve the U.S. immigration crisis. The solution is for the Obama administration to push for its much-promised immigration reform this year. That would help both secure the borders and give a path to legalization to more than 10 million undocumented immigrants. Otherwise, headline-seeking local politicians in other states will seek to fill the vacuum with similarly xenophobic laws, with not much more effect than producing a big Hispanic exodus -- within the United States.

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