

**THE NEW YORK TIMES**

May 27, 2010

# **A Massachusetts Move on Immigration Law**

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BOSTON — The Massachusetts Senate on Thursday approved a series of measures to tighten [immigration](#) enforcement, reflecting election-year unease over the issue in a Democratic-controlled Legislature that has spurned such crackdowns in the past.

The measures, which passed 28 to 10 in an amendment to a budget bill, would require state contractors to confirm that their workers were here legally and prohibit the contractors from doing business with the state if they were found to employ illegal immigrants.

The changes would also codify into law an existing state policy that bars illegal immigrants from qualifying for resident-tuition rates at state colleges. And they would require public housing agencies to give legal residents priority for subsidized housing.

In addition, the state attorney general's office would be required to set up a hot line for people to anonymously report businesses that hire illegal immigrants, and to investigate any such reports.

"It's a reaction to a political climate that has been successfully manipulated by extremist elements," said Frank Soultz, a spokesman for the [Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition](#). "Lawmakers who always supported immigrants before have suddenly turned and voted for the most anti-immigrant bill we've seen in Massachusetts in years."

But Senator Steven A. Baddour, a Democrat who supported the legislation, said it was crucial.

"We have an illegal immigration problem that needs to be addressed here in the Commonwealth," Mr. Baddour said, "and this is a good bipartisan solution."

The vote came several weeks after the State House, also controlled by Democrats, narrowly rejected a measure that would have barred illegal immigrants here from receiving state and federal benefits. It is not yet clear how much support the Senate measures will muster in the House.

A [Suffolk University/7 News poll](#) released Wednesday found that 84 percent of voters want the state to require proof of citizenship before awarding benefits like public assistance. The poll of 500 registered voters, which had a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points, also found that 53 percent supported Arizona's new immigration law.

But only 40 percent said that Massachusetts should pass a similar law.