

# Mexicans in South Carolina "Confused" About Immigration Law

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Mexicans in South Carolina are confused about articles in the state immigration law that went into effect on Jan. 1, 2012, so activists have hurriedly prepared information campaigns so they'll understand the situation and know what to do.

"Here there's nothing but confusion and disinformation," 44-year-old Mexican immigrant José Luis Cortez told Efe.

He was one of the more than 1,000 people to turn out Sunday in Columbia, South Carolina's capital, for a visit by diplomats from the Mexican Consulate-General in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Immigrants are still afraid of running into the cops, Cortez said, though they know they can't be asked for their papers since some of the articles in the law have been blocked.

Late last month, U.S. District Judge Richard Gergel in Charleston blocked three of the most controversial parts of SB 20, including the mandate that police verify the immigration status of people they suspect are undocumented.

He also barred the state from enforcing a requirement that people carry immigration documents at all times and a provision making it a felony to transport or harbor undocumented immigrants.

But what was enacted was the provision that punishes with a jail sentence those who forge or sell fake identity documents, and the requirement that companies use E-Verify to investigate whether their employees can work here legally.

Gergel said on Jan. 9 that he would wait for the ruling of the [Supreme Court](#) on Arizona's harsh immigration law to take a final decision on the future of the South Carolina measure.

An estimated 45,000 of South Carolina's 235,000 Hispanics are thought to be undocumented immigrants. Mexicans make up more than half the state's Latino population.

For David Villaseca, 37, the toughest thing about living in South Carolina with the new law is finding a job "since they're checking our papers."

"I'm unemployed right now and I'm afraid to look for a job. Life here is very hard," the Mexican said.

"Many got out of South Carolina before the law took effect because employers began to use the E-Verify program. We who live here know about that measure. And there's not much work

because the economy's bad," 40-year-old Nina Clemente, a Mexican immigrant who came to Columbia in 2009, told Efe.

Jorge Hernández, who has been working in the fields for eight years harvesting corn, tomatoes and other crops in central South Carolina's Sumter County, commented that jobs in the agricultural sector are "uncertain."

"We know the farmers need us and so we haven't been that worried about the law, but we don't know what might happen in the next few months if they start checking our documents because of SB 20," he said.

Mexico's consul-general for the Carolinas, Carlos Flores Vizcarra, notes the continued lack of clarity about how SB 20 will be implemented.

"We've been dedicated to keeping our compatriots informed before and after the enactment of SB 20 every time we have a consular day like today in the state (South Carolina)," Flores Vizcarra told Efe.

"Nonetheless, we must instruct our countrymen that they must put together a plan of action and get their documents in order along with those of their children...in case there's a deportation in the family," he said.

Read more: <http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2012/01/24/mexicans-in-s-carolina-confused-about-immigration-law/print#ixzz1kgCm8g00>