

S. Carolina immigration law will also affect legal residents

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Charlotte – South Carolina's new immigration law, SB 20, which faces a lawsuit from pro-immigrant organizations, will not only affect undocumented foreigners but also U.S. citizens and legal residents.

Puerto Rico-born Carolina Belen de Paguada is concerned about the possible entry into force of the controversial law, which was inspired by Arizona's SB 1070 legislation.

Married to an undocumented Honduran, Belen says that even she is in danger of being penalized with a fine of up to \$5,000 for transporting a foreigner without authorization to be in the country, or even for giving a neighbor a ride to church.

"My husband is the supporter of the family. I have a 4-month-old baby. If they deport him, I don't know what we're going to do. The situation is terrible for everyone," the 20-year-old told Efe.

Also, SB 20 makes it a misdemeanor for adults not to carry documents that verify their immigration status.

The young mother, who has lived in South Carolina for 15 years, says that the law is "racist."

Under SB 20, local law enforcement officers would be authorized to investigate the immigration status of a person they suspect may be in the country illegally.

According to Victoria Middleton, director of the South Carolina chapter of the [American Civil Liberties Union](#), according that power to local police departments invites discrimination.

"Anyone who looks or sounds 'foreign,' including legal residents and U.S. citizens, could be the target of racial profiling," Middleton told Efe.

Naturalized Argentine immigrant Andres Leone, a South Carolina resident since 2001, said that SB 20 opens the door to xenophobia against anyone who "sounds or looks different."

"It's an uncertainty even for us documented Hispanics," Leone told Efe.

In the suit against SB 20, filed on Oct. 12 by the ACLU and other organizations, one of the plaintiffs is a legal resident who argues that the law creates a "climate of suspicion" against legal immigrants.

"What's happening here is that people are not accepting the groups who are arriving. They're rejecting them, and they are very loud. They want to blame someone and make them into scapegoats, and now it's the Hispanics," 29-year-old Charleston resident Pepe Hernandez told Efe.

Andre Segura, an attorney for the ACLU Immigrants Rights Project, told Efe on Tuesday that last week a motion was filed in federal district court in Charleston seeking an injunction to delay the implementation of SB 20, now set for Jan. 1, pending a final ruling on the law's constitutionality.

Figures from the 2010 Census show that Hispanics represent 5.1 percent of the population of South Carolina, or 235,893 people, of whom around 50,000 are undocumented, according to estimates by the Pew Research Center.

<http://latino.foxnews.com/latino/news/2011/10/25/s-carolina-immigration-law-will-also-affect-legal-residents/>