

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 18, 2010, 8:30AM

MEDIA CONTACTS:

Luis Fernandez, Ph.D., luis.fernandez@nau.edu, 928-523-5673

Randall Amster, J.D., Ph.D., ramster@prescott.edu, 928-350-2238

**CONSORTIUM OF PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC ASSOCIATIONS CONDEMNS
ARIZONA IMMIGRATION LAW AND RELATED STATE POLICIES**

A working group comprised of representatives from over a dozen leading professional and academic associations has issued a joint statement condemning Arizona's immigration law (SB 1070) and related state policies such as the prohibition against Ethnic Studies programs (HB 2281), and calling for these laws to be rescinded. We, the **Consortium of Professional and Academic Associations**, believe that these laws are inherently unjust, and that their application threatens to inflame anti-immigrant sentiments and undermine constructive solutions to the challenges faced by communities in Arizona and across the nation. We call upon the governor, legislators, and people of Arizona to work diligently and swiftly to repeal these laws.

Our organizations include members from fields including sociology, criminology, political science, peace studies, psychology, anthropology, environmental studies, Chicano/a studies, and a multitude of related areas of study. Our collective membership numbers more than 10,000 scholars, educators, and activists, with many residing in Arizona. The decision to join together in issuing the open letter below represents an unprecedented and historical moment of collaboration. As academics and professionals concerned about social and environmental justice, human rights, and due process, we add our collective voices to those of many others from across the country calling for the immediate rescission SB 1070 (and, as amended, HB 2162) and HB 2281 in the name of equity, compassion, integrity, constitutionality, and sound public policy.

Signatories to the joint statement include representatives from the following professional organizations and academic associations, all of which have issued individual statements or otherwise indicated their opposition to and condemnation of SB 1070 and related policies (additional signatories may be added to this growing list as organizations finalize their support):

American Studies Association (ASA)
Chicano/Latino Faculty and Staff Association, ASU (CLFSA)
Justice Studies Association (JSA)
Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS)
National Association for Chicano and Chicana Studies (NACCS)
Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)
Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA)
Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR)
Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)
Sociologists Without Borders (Sociologos Sin Fronteras) (SSF)

A **press conference** featuring delegates from these organizations will be held on **Wednesday, May 19, 2010, at 1PM** on the Senate Lawn at the **Arizona State Capitol**. Representatives will each issue short statements, and then be available for questions and follow-up discussion. Confirmed participants and representatives at the press conference include:

Randall Amster, J.D., Ph.D., Executive Director, PJSA
Paul Espinosa, Ph.D., President, CLFSA
Luis Fernandez, Ph.D., Board Member, SSSP
Zoe Hammer, Ph.D., Program Committee Member, ASA
Manuel de Jesus Hernandez G., Ph.D., Former National Chair, NACCS
Marie Keta Miranda, Ph.D., Chair, MALCS
Devon Pena, Ph.D., President, NACCS
Michelle Tellez, Ph.D., Board Member, NACCS

Finally, by way of background and context, the following member organizations have issued specific statements condemning SB 1070, which can be found at these online locations:

SSSP: <http://www.sssp1.org/file/Brewer%20Final%20Ltr%20-%20Arizona%20SB%201070.pdf>
PJSA: <http://www.peacejusticestudies.org/resources/blogcomments.php?qwerty=79>
NACCS: http://www.naccs.org/images/naccs/ltrs/SB_1070.pdf
MALCS: <http://malcs.net/blog/?p=335> and <http://malcs.net/blog/?p=349>
SSF: <http://www.petitiononline.com/ssfbyctt/petition.html>
PsySR: <http://www.psysr.org/about/programs/wellbeing/immigrationreform.php>
NAISA: <http://naisa.org/node/189>

May 17, 2010

To Governor Brewer, the State Legislature, and the People of Arizona:

We wish to express our deep concern with and unequivocal condemnation of Senate Bill 1070, which you signed into law on April 23, 2010. By making it a state crime to be in Arizona without federal authorization, and also making it a punishable offense to support someone without the appropriate documents, SB 1070 criminalizes countless decent human beings who live, work, pay taxes, and raise their families in Arizona. In addition, the enforcement of such a constitutionally problematic law threatens everyone's civil rights in the process, and undermines the potential for fostering an environment based on peace and social justice. We unanimously denounce this law and strenuously urge that you rescind it in the name of compassion and human dignity.

We are all non-partisan professional organizations of scholars, educators, and practitioners, with thousands of members from across the country and abroad, committed to and knowledgeable about a wide range of social justice and environmental issues. We count among our members numerous scholars and other professionals who are among the most knowledgeable in the country on the subjects of immigration, including undocumented immigration, and our legal and political systems. While immigration reform in the United States may be overdue, we also know that using this to justify state laws that usurp federal authority over immigration will create many more legal and social problems than it resolves.

Moreover, we note that the combined effect of SB 1070 with the prohibition on Ethnic Studies contained in HB 2281 creates an atmosphere of legislated intolerance and racialized politicking that is simply untenable, unwise, and unjust. Indeed, the simple fact that SB 1070 had to be amended, under pressure following its passage, by HB 2162 (which sought to qualify the conditions for officer contact) demonstrates quite clearly the inherently flawed and potentially racist implications of this piece of legislation. We note here as well that the purported "remedy" of requiring a "stop" before officers can inquire further about legal status based a "reasonable suspicion" is equally expansive in its application, and thus equally problematic. These alterations, again adopted in haste following public pressure, will not provide sufficient protection against racial profiling.

Police officers are not immigration officers. Putting them in the position of enforcing federal immigration law will destroy the trust between police officers and communities so essential for effective law enforcement. It will also lead to unwarranted and prolonged detention of citizens and legal residents, increasing the likelihood of civil rights litigation against police departments, cities, and towns, and potentially damaging family units across the state. Despite language ostensibly prohibiting racial profiling, this will be the de facto reality of the law's implementation. Physical appearance, particularly being of Hispanic background, will unavoidably remain the primary factor

determining whether someone is or is not asked to prove her or his citizenship or residency status. For all these reasons, many law enforcement leaders across the country, as well as in Arizona, oppose this law. It would be wise to heed the objections of the law enforcement officers who are now faced with enforcing this unjust law.

For some, the stated intent of SB 1070 unequivocally is to cleanse Arizona of its undocumented immigrants and their families, among them children and other relatives born in the United States, as evidenced by the fact that legislative supporters of this law have repeatedly and proudly described this as part of a strategy to make life so unbearable for undocumented residents and their families that they will leave the state. Any law whose goal and effect is to drive an ethnic population to leave its place of residence is a crime against humanity under current international law. The law will also have the effect of separating cohesive family units, leading to increased marginalization and immiseration among communities already facing grave challenges. In this manner, SB 1070 risks making Arizona a pariah state on the national and international stages.

Furthermore, whatever the intent, at minimum this law will create a climate of fear so intense as to make low-wage workers even more vulnerable and therefore much easier to exploit by unscrupulous employers. Denying immigrant workers protections or otherwise making them more vulnerable does not stop them from coming. Rather, it simply drives them further underground and makes them more exploitable. Finally, the climate of fear and hostility that this law will create is antithetical to the aims of promoting a more just and peaceful world. By institutionalizing chauvinism and magnifying differences of race and ethnicity, SB 1070 promises to enlarge the gulf between diverse communities and pit groups against one another, rather than encouraging people to work together to find mutually-beneficial solutions to challenging issues. Ironically, and sadly, the net effect of SB 1070 will be precisely what is sought to be prohibited under HB 2281, namely that it will in practice and principle serve to “promote resentment toward a certain ethnic group.”

Opposition to this law has been rapid and strong, and is likely to become even stronger, as more and more groups and individuals boycott the state of Arizona and businesses based in Arizona. We are aware as well of the ostensible support in the state for the law, and therefore recognize the political pressures that have led you to pass this law. But widespread support for a law does not make it just; not long ago the majority of southerners supported segregation laws. As Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote in his landmark essay *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, following the teachings of St. Augustine: “An unjust law is no law at all.’ ... Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.” It is especially in instances such as these that strong moral leadership is needed, and we are appealing to the governor, state legislators, and all concerned Arizonans to provide it. Please choose to be on the right side of history and work to overturn this patently unjust law. We thank you for your time and attention in this important matter.

Sincerely,

The Consortium of Professional and Academic Associations, including the following:

American Studies Association (ASA)

Chicano/Latino Faculty and Staff Association, ASU (CLFSA)

Justice Studies Association (JSA)

Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social (MALCS)

National Association for Chicano and Chicana Studies (NACCS)

Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)

Peace and Justice Studies Association (PJSA)

Psychologists for Social Responsibility (PsySR)

Society for the Study of Social Problems (SSSP)

Sociologists Without Borders (Sociologos Sin Fronteras) (SSF)