

News Release



WYOMING SENATE DISTRICT 3

FOR RELEASE Immediately
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Guest Column

Guarding the Heartland: Why Immigration Security Matters in Wyoming

CHEYENNE - Today in his inaugural address, President Trump outlined his policy on illegal immigration and securing the nation's border. We must take decisive action to follow his lead and work at all levels of government to implement these policies.

Wyoming, often perceived as remote and insulated, is not immune to the impacts of illegal immigration. Despite being far from the southern border, Wyoming is - in many ways - a border state. The challenges posed by porous national borders ripple across the nation, reaching even the Cowboy State. It's time to confront this reality and take decisive action to protect our economy, public services, critical infrastructure, and national security.

Illegal immigration is a nationwide issue, with over 11 million unauthorized immigrants estimated to reside in the U.S., according to the Department of Homeland Security. While Wyoming's population is small, the effects are deeply felt. Our industries - agriculture, mining, and construction - face unfair competition from employers who hire unauthorized workers at reduced wages. This not only undercuts Wyoming workers, but also stifles job opportunities for those struggling to recover post-pandemic.

The stakes are even higher when considering national security. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported over 150 encounters with individuals on the terrorist watch list attempting to cross the border illegally in 2023. Wyoming's critical infrastructure - including military bases, power plants, dams, and water systems - makes our state a potential target. These assets are essential not only for Wyoming's residents, but also for the entire nation. Without strong state policies on immigration enforcement, we leave ourselves vulnerable to threats that could have catastrophic consequences.

Our public resources also bear the strain. Wyoming's schools, healthcare systems, and public benefits are designed to support lawful residents and taxpayers. Allowing

unauthorized individuals access to these services reduces their availability and quality for those who contribute to the system.

The proposed legislation in **SF0124 Identify, report, detain, and deport unauthorized individuals** addresses these challenges. It empowers law enforcement, requires employment verification, and ensures that public benefits are reserved for legal residents. Importantly, the bill explicitly mandates enforcement without regard to race or ethnicity, focusing on fairness and accountability rather than targeting individuals.

Even Wyoming, tucked away in the heart of America, is a border state. By passing this legislation, we uphold the values of fairness, security, and accountability that define us as a state. Let's send a clear message: Wyoming stands for lawful immigration, strong borders, and a secure future for all its citizens.

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