

Enacting the Keep Washington Working Act – SB 5689

Establishing a statewide policy supporting Washington State's economy and Immigrants' role in the workplace

- Retain the Workforce necessary for our Economy
- Recognize the Role of Immigrants in the Workplace
- Emphasize the Public Safety role of Law Enforcement

What is the Keep Washington Working Act?

The goal of SB 5689 is to keep our economy thriving. Washington prides itself on welcoming a diverse workforce from around the globe. We have the largest technology companies in the world. Washington agriculture industry is the 3rd largest exporter in the nation. The hospitality, service, and health care sectors, and the food processing industry are major contributors to the economy. Timber continues to be important on both sides of the state. The labor and construction workforce is significant and growing. Small businesses are flourishing in Washington. Fifteen percent of all business owners in this state are foreign born, contributing \$2.4 billion to the state economy. Immigrants wield \$44.7 billion in consumer purchasing power and their businesses' employ over 94,000 people.

Is there really a need for this?

Yes there is. Nearly one million Washingtonians are immigrants and make up 16% of the workforce. We have learned of many instances where immigrants and others are being profiled and stopped, as well as being harassed. A state-wide approach will ensure Washingtonians feel safe and that business from all industries and all across the state continue to thrive and promote the local economy, and that law enforcement and public agencies are able to provide their services. This will reduce the burden on law enforcement and allow them to focus on the communities they serve.

What does the Keep Washington Working Act do?

- Establishes a steering committee in the Department of Commerce to: Develop strategies with businesses, labor, and immigrant advocacy organizations to support current and future industries across the state; conduct research, support business and agriculture leadership, and provide a stable predictable workforce.
- The Attorney General will develop model policies that limit immigration enforcement to assure public facilities remain safe and accessible to all Washington residents. State agencies shall not use state resources for any unconstitutional laws or policies that target Washington residents on the basis of race, religion, immigration, or citizenship status, or national or ethnic origin. Law enforcement shall not use resources for immigration enforcement activities, such as making arrests based on civil immigration warrants and performing other functions of an immigration officer.

For more information contact Senator Lisa Wellman at 360-786-7641 or email her asst. Noah.Burgher@leg.wa.gov