

Introduced by Senator Cedillo

December 4, 2006

An act to add Section 12087.5 to the Government Code, relating to naturalization services.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1, as introduced, Cedillo. Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Existing law sets forth the duties of the Department of Community Services and Development respecting certain community programs in the state. Existing law appropriates \$3,000,000 to the department for purposes of the Naturalization Services Program, which assists legal permanent residents in obtaining citizenship.

This bill would establish within the department the Office of Immigrant Affairs in order to ensure the integration and civic participation of new citizens in the state. The office would be overseen and managed by a director who would administer the Naturalization Services Program and develop a program plan to add components to that program. The director would also work with local organizations to ensure the success and availability of services provided through the Naturalization Services Program. The bill would also authorize the office to enter into agreements with nonprofit organizations that serve immigrants and would authorize these organizations to be reimbursed by the office if funds are available and the director approves the reimbursement, as provided.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) The Legislature finds and declares as follows:

2 (1) Immigrants are a vibrant force in California's changing
3 demographics. More than one-quarter of California residents are
4 foreign born. Of the 8.8 million foreign born, 39 percent are United
5 States citizens and 3.3 million are legal permanent residents.

6 (2) Most noncitizens have family members who are citizens.
7 Ninety percent of Latinos and 80 percent of Asians live in
8 households with citizens.

9 (3) Approximately 40 percent of Californians speak a language
10 other than English at home.

11 (4) Fifty-five percent of California's immigrants come from
12 Latin America, while 33 percent come from Asia, 8 percent from
13 Europe, 2 percent from North America, and the rest from Africa
14 and Oceania.

15 (5) Immigrants fuel California's economy through their labor
16 and entrepreneurship. Immigrants comprise one-third of
17 California's labor force in key economic sectors: 40 percent in
18 general services, 45 percent in manufacturing, and 33 percent work
19 in a variety of sectors. Sixty-six percent of gardeners are
20 immigrants. Sixty-six percent of cooks are immigrants. Sixty-six
21 percent of domestic workers are immigrants. Ninety percent of
22 farm workers are immigrants.

23 (6) Immigrants are among California's most productive
24 entrepreneurs and have created jobs for tens of thousands of
25 Californians. In San Jose alone, immigrant owners of technology
26 companies created more than 58,000 jobs and generated more than
27 \$17 billion in sales during the 1990s.

28 (7) Immigrants will represent a significant proportion of
29 California's voters in years to come. In California, there are
30 currently 2.7 million immigrants eligible to naturalize and several
31 million more that will soon become eligible to naturalize. This
32 will increase the number of voters who are naturalized citizens in
33 the years to come.

34 (8) California has at least 85 cities where noncitizen adults
35 comprise more than 25 percent of the city's total voting-age
36 population. There are 30 municipalities where noncitizen adults
37 make up more than 40 percent of the voting-age population.

1 (9) Immigrants often require the most assistance immediately
2 upon arrival to the United States. However, as immigrants reside
3 in the state for a longer period of time, they are less likely to use
4 services and more likely to contribute to the state's culture and
5 economy.

6 (10) It is in the best interest of the state and its residents to
7 establish an Office of Immigrant Affairs for state government to
8 advocate and promote cooperation and understanding between
9 government agencies and immigrant residents, and to assist
10 immigrants toward naturalization.

11 (11) Citizenship and civic participation among all California
12 residents is vital to the economic and societal well-being of the
13 state.

14 (12) It is in the state's best interests to help its immigrant
15 population integrate in society, develop a sense of belonging, and
16 seize opportunities for success in order to ensure equal opportunity
17 for a high quality of life of every resident.

18 (13) California's primary goal should be to support the ability
19 of all residents, including immigrants to be economically
20 self-sufficient, participate in our nation's and state's political
21 process, and foster a sense of responsibility to our community.

22 (b) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Office of Immigrant
23 Affairs ensure state government agencies and California
24 communities are aware of the needs of immigrants and that
25 immigrants receive appropriate assistance to quickly achieve and
26 maintain self-reliance and full integration into our society.

27 SEC. 2. Section 12087.5 is added to the Government Code, to
28 read:

29 12087.5. (a) The Office of Immigrant Affairs is hereby
30 established within the Department of Community Service and
31 Development. In order to ensure the integration and civic
32 participation of new citizens in the state, the office shall do all of
33 the following:

34 (1) In coordination with city and county government agencies,
35 ensure that new citizens and eligible immigrants obtain information
36 about the naturalization process and help them access translated
37 information on resources available in the state. The office shall
38 also post a resource list and a list of referrals on adult education,
39 English literacy, civic education, citizenship services, consumer
40 protection, housing, and domestic violence services in California.

(2) Make known the needs of immigrant communities by setting objectives and deliverables, and partnering with state government agencies to expand and assist outreach efforts to ethnic communities. The office may work with agencies, including, but not limited to, the State Board of Education, the Refugee Program Bureau within the State Department of Social Services, and the Office of Immigrant Assistance within the Department of Justice, to coordinate and streamline efforts and existing services provided to California's immigrant communities by various state agencies.

(3) Work with state agencies and departments to identify existing, and advocate for, culturally and linguistically competent resources and programs that can be used by immigrant residents to assist their integration, including, but not limited to, education, adult education, language skills, civics, job training, health, and naturalization services.

(4) Conduct data-driven policy analysis on issues impacting immigrant communities and make policy recommendations to the Legislature and the Governor on state level and federal level policy impacting California's immigrants.

(5) Develop strategies and program proposals and identify services that support the ability of new citizens to be economically self-sufficient, participate in governance, and foster a sense of belonging and responsibility to the community.

(6) Disseminate information and provide referrals to existing ESL classes in order to help new citizens learn English, be informed of our laws and support public safety, know their rights, be responsible family members, engage in civic affairs, and maximize their contributions to ensure a high quality of life in our community.

(7) Work with educational institutions, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and private programs to collect and disseminate multilingual civics curriculum for people participating in the Naturalization Services Program established pursuant to Section 25200 of the Welfare and Institutions Code.

(b) The office may accept donations from individuals and private organizations to assist in the implementation of this section.

(c) The office shall partner and coordinate with other state agencies to ensure proper outreach and response to the immigrant community about state government's programs and resources. The office shall partner and coordinate with other state agencies and

1 community-based organizations to coordinate, assist, and cooperate
2 with the efforts of state departments and agencies to serve the
3 needs of immigrants, especially in the areas of culture, education,
4 employment, health, housing, welfare, and recreation.

5 (d) The office shall be overseen and managed by a director to
6 be appointed by the Director of Community Services and
7 Development.

8 (e) The director of the office shall do all of the following:

9 (1) Administer the Naturalization Services Program, and develop
10 a program plan to add components to that program to allow it to
11 cater to the needs of California's immigrant population more
12 efficiently and effectively in the areas of naturalization and civic
13 participation.

14 (2) Work with local organizations to ensure the success and
15 availability of services provided through the Naturalization
16 Services Program and create a strategy to promote public awareness
17 of the contributions of immigrants and the ways that immigrants
18 can support community goals.

19 (3) Oversee all functions of the Office of Immigrant Affairs.

20 (f) (1) The Office of Immigrant Affairs may seek input from
21 nonprofit organizations whose primary mission is to serve
22 immigrants and their families. The office may enter into
23 partnerships, cooperative agreements, or contracts with nonprofit
24 organizations to serve as liaisons between the office and the
25 immigrant communities in California. All partnerships, cooperative
26 agreements, or contracts shall be approved by the director of the
27 office. Nonprofit organizations may seek reimbursement from the
28 office, but that reimbursement is contingent upon approval by the
29 director and the availability of funding from the office's existing
30 budget.

31 (2) A liaison described in paragraph (1) shall do the following:

32 (A) Conduct stakeholder meetings in designated regions in
33 California to identify the needs of immigrants in California and
34 report its findings to the office for the purpose of increasing
35 awareness about immigrant communities and making policy
36 recommendations to the office.

37 (B) Gather information about the needs of California's
38 immigrant population, determine key state governmental resources
39 used by immigrant communities, identify key policy areas and
40 areas of concern, and report findings with recommendations to the

- 1 Legislature and the Governor as to how the state can respond to
- 2 the issues impacting California’s immigrant population.
- 3 (C) Identify ways to define and measure immigrant integration
- 4 and self-reliance and report progress in these areas to the office.
- 5 (D) Work to identify ways to improve the naturalization process
- 6 and immigration services.
- 7 (g) The office may seek input from other nonprofit
- 8 organizations, state agencies, cities, counties, or other designated
- 9 entities to carry out the functions of the office.