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RISEing Issues in Iowa, April 2018

UNI RISE

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RISEing Issues in Iowa

April 2018

Legislative update: “Sanctuary Cities” bill signed by governor

On Tuesday, April 10th, Governor Kim Reynolds signed Senate File 481 into law, effective June 1st, 2018. As a result, funding will be withheld from Iowa cities and counties that intentionally violate federal immigration laws.

The Des Moines Register reported that Republican leaders in the State legislature have stated that this bill was written “in response to a policy adopted in Iowa City that says the city will not commit local resources to enforcing federal immigration law, as well as to similar policies in cities across the country.” Meanwhile, critics argue that since Iowa currently has no sanctuary cities, the bill will only increase discrimination and make it harder for Iowan police forces to protect their communities. The bill was passed in response to an increasingly hostile political environment in which immigrant communities are targeted. Following the election of Donald Trump to the presidency, there has been a renewed crackdown on illegal immigrants across the country, fueling discrimination against immigrant communities.

By furthering the distrust between immigrant communities and police forces, some argue that residents of these communities will be less likely to report a crime to a police officer in fear of deportation.

Marshalltown Police Chief Mike Tupper states, “It’s still something I oppose from a professional law enforcement perspective, this is going to diminish public safety, it's going to make people hesitant to work with us, and it’s going to cause problems, in the end; we don’t have a sanctuary city problem in Iowa” (as quoted by Adam Soddors in the Marshalltown Times-Republican).

Community spotlight: Waterloo YWCA



The YWCA in Waterloo offers an English conversation program for immigrants and refugees. This program invites both interested non-native speakers and English speakers interested in tutoring to drop in Mondays 5:30-7:00 PM or Wednesdays from 6:15 - 7:30 PM.

UNI RISE has partnered with the English class program in the past to conduct a clothes drive/mock clothing store to assist learners with vocabulary associated with making purchases and speaking about clothing. Working with this language program can provide an opportunity for students to use a gift they may not realize they have— being able to speak in English!

Interested students can contact the YWCA or UNI RISE for more information.

YWCA of Waterloo Phone: 319-234-7589

Email: ywca@ywcabhc.org



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Controversial change to US Census

The US Census Bureau has announced that the 2020 census will include a question about the citizenship status of respondents.

The US Justice Department requested the addition of this question as a way to gather data that could help enforce the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The Census Scientific Advisory Committee, a board that advises officials who compile census questions, released a statement criticizing the move. The committee expressed concern that this question could be seen as a partisan move by the nominally nonpartisan Census Bureau.

A screenshot of a census question on a light blue background. The question is "Is this person a citizen of the United States?". Below the question are five radio button options:

- Yes, born in the United States
- Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas
- Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents
- Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization – *Print year of naturalization* ↘
Below this option is a four-digit input field with vertical dividers.
- No, not a U.S. citizen

Image from the [Pew Research Center](#)

According to the Pew Research Center, the question will not ask the respondent to specify whether they are in the country legally or not, but groups fear that this question will still discourage undocumented residents, or those who are unsure of their status, from completing the census. The question has been brought to the courts in a lawsuit by California attorney general Xavier Becerra. The case argues that skewing data from immigrant populations could make the government redistricting process less accurate.

The US census included a question about citizenship status until the 1950s, and the American Community Survey, a sample of census questions given to a small population of US residents, still includes a similar question. The Census Bureau plans to use the same wording as the survey and therefore claims that the question would not require further testing.

Interested in discussing these topics (and many more)?

Join UNI RISE:

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Meetings: Wednesdays 6:30 pm Maucker Union meditation room