

State Representative Kim Thatcher
House District 25



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Rep Thatcher Launches New Immigration Legislation

(Salem) A group of bills to reform immigration laws in Oregon were launched this week by [State Representative Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer, St. Paul, Newberg). The legislation deals with state benefits, law enforcement and other topics Oregonians have been concerned about in recent years.

[House Bill 3432 calls for state elections officials to ask for proof of citizenship before they register an individual to vote.](#) This measure is also part of a package of [election reforms](#) announced by Thatcher Thursday.

[House Bill 3435 requires state agencies to verify legal presence before hiring someone.](#) "Our state government needs to set an example and send a message to other employers," explained Representative Thatcher.

[House Bill 3436 limits state benefits to just those with proper legal status.](#) Thatcher pointed out, "with the drastic budget cuts facing our state, we need to prioritize funding for Oregonians who are here legally."

[House Bill 3437 establishes a special program to enhance mechanization in Oregon's farms and nurseries.](#) The Center for Assessment, Advancement and Adoption for Agricultural Technologies would be created at one of the experiment stations run by Oregon State University. Increased use of technology has helped reduce the reliance on migrant farm workers for many employers.

[House Bill 3439 grants early release for illegal immigrants charged with low level crimes currently housed in Oregon prisons if they agree to deportation.](#) Under the bill, Oregon would become part of a federal program called Rapid REPAT (Removal of Eligible Parolees Accepted for Transfer). Arizona saved nearly \$19 million since joining the program in 2005 and Washington's Governor is also trying to implement the program.

[House Bill 3440 ensures county jails run a check for immigration status anytime a new offender is booked into their facility.](#) The bill also allows local law enforcement to work with federal agencies such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on criminal investigations. Currently, Oregon Revised Statute 181.850, does not allow for that level of cooperation.

Representative Thatcher submitted HB 3440, affectionately called "The Judy Bill", on behalf of Craig Cox from Newberg. Cox lost his wife to an illegal immigrant drunk driver in December 2007. Cox said, "no family should have to suffer the tragedies we have. Our jails should ensure illegal aliens are being reported to the feds and deported." The offender in the Cox case had multiple DUIs and other crimes on his record in addition to being deported to Mexico several years earlier. Judy Cox was also critically injured by another illegal immigrant driving drunk 27 years before the crash that took her life.

Marion County started ICE checks in 2007. "This has taken out the discretion of Corrections Deputies to pick and choose which names will be given to ICE and has given us more consistency in the reporting. As a result, our working relationship has improved making the process more efficient," said Sheriff Russ Isham.

[House Joint Resolution 19 urges Congress to increase payments to state and county jails for housing illegal immigrants.](#) It costs Oregon over \$30 million dollars annually and the current federal reimbursement covers a fraction of that cost.

Last year 41 states enacted a total of 206 immigration related laws. [Representative Thatcher has been a leader for immigration reform in the Oregon Legislature](#) and is one of the founding members of a national coalition called [State Legislators for Legal Immigration](#).

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