

State Representative  
Linda Flores  
House District 51



State Representative  
Kim Thatcher  
House District 25

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CONTACT: Dawn Phillips 503.750.1764

### ***Immigration Call-To-Action in 2008 Emergency Session***

(Salem) During a joint news conference at the State Capitol this morning, [State Representative Linda Flores](#) (R-Clackamas) and [Representatives Kim Thatcher](#) (R-Keizer, Newberg, St. Paul) delivered a Call-To-Action on immigration reform. "We're asking Oregonians to pressure the Legislature and the Governor to take action on these important issues," said Flores. [Oregonians for Immigration Reform](#) hosted the event which also included chief petitioners for a new ballot measure.

Deadlines are fast approaching this month to draft bills for the February 2008 Emergency Legislative Session. However, the key legislative committees on transportation, elections and judiciary show little interest in addressing critical areas such as drivers' licenses, voter registration and law enforcement investigations. "We hope the legislature does the right thing; if not, I'm sure we'll be right back here a year from now talking about the ballot measure," explained Thatcher referring to [Initiative #112](#) which was recently approved for signature collection.

[Flores and Thatcher proposed more than a dozen bills during the 2007 Legislative Session](#) related to immigration. [Drivers' license security](#) gained the most attention; however, Flores pointed out Oregon needs "full compliance with the federal law to ensure we have the strongest possible safeguards against identity theft and to make sure only people with the proper legal status are getting drivers' licenses."

"We have another critical election year around the corner and our democracy should not be compromised even by the chance that non-citizens are being allowed to vote," noted Flores. The pair wants elections officials to verify citizenship before allowing first time voters to register.

Representative Thatcher displayed a map of Oregon with over a thousand offenders marked in the counties where they were convicted. She said, "every prison bed occupied by an illegal immigrant offender is one less space available to incarcerate an offender here legally." The map portrayed inmates in the state prison system. There are hundreds more in county jails.

Law enforcement agencies across Oregon have been frustrated by laws which hamper their ability to identify and investigate illegal immigrants. "So many other cases are out there where Oregonians have been victimized by someone who should have been deported the first time around, or the cops might have been able to tag them on a traffic stop and so on," added Thatcher. She and Flores want current statutes modified to give police more flexibility in working with federal agencies in cracking down on criminal enterprises.

In 2007 Flores and Thatcher sponsored [House Bill 2680](#) dealing with voter registration, [House Bill 2686](#) addressed drivers' licenses and [House Bill 2682](#) related to police powers. There are many other areas of immigration reform, but Flores and Thatcher are focusing on these three for the 2008 Session. They hope the public will contact their legislators and urge them to support stronger laws for drivers' licenses, voter registration and police agencies. A recent national poll showed 77% of American voters [wanted more protections for drivers' licenses](#) and 73% wanted [better tools for law enforcement](#).

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State Representative Linda Flores  
900 Court Street, SE H-287, Salem, OR 97301 503-  
986-1451 [www.leg.state.or.us/flores](http://www.leg.state.or.us/flores)  
[Rep.lindaflores@state.or.us](mailto:Rep.lindaflores@state.or.us)

State Representative Kim Thatcher  
900 Court Street, SE H-490, Salem, OR 97301 503-  
986-1425 [www.leg.state.or.us/thatcher](http://www.leg.state.or.us/thatcher)  
[Rep.kimthatcher@state.or.us](mailto:Rep.kimthatcher@state.or.us)