

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
NORTHEASTERN DIVISION**

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Governor Robert Bentley, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 5:11-cv-02484-SLB

**Exhibit in Support of
Notice Of Supplemental
Evidence Regarding
Emergency Motion to
Enjoin Portions of HB 56
Pending Appeal**

Exhibit 2

**Rena Havner Philips,
*Foley Elementary students, parents afraid of
Alabama's new immigration law,*
Mobile Press-Register, Sept. 30, 2011**

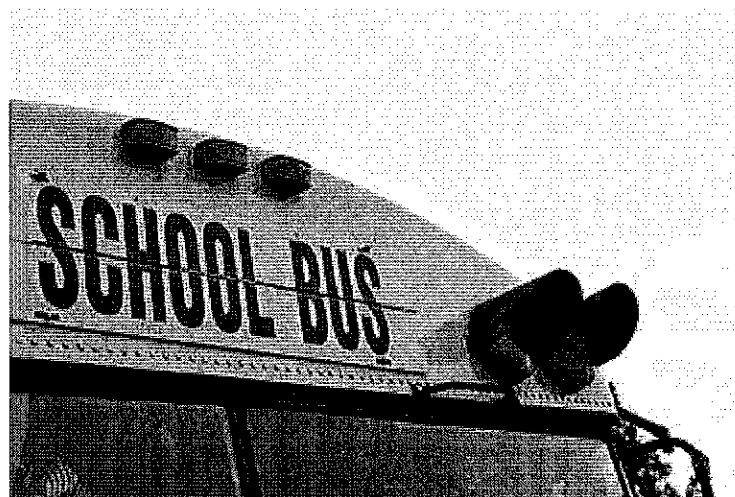


Foley Elementary students, parents afraid of Alabama's new immigration law

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By **Rena Havner Philips, Press-Register**



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Press-Register

Officials at public school systems in Baldwin and Mobile counties expect to see students of Hispanic descent to withdraw as a result of a ruling by a federal judge on Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2011, upholding much of Alabama's strict new immigration law.

FOLEY, Alabama -- Many of the 223 Hispanic students at Foley Elementary came to school Thursday crying and afraid, said Principal Bill Lawrence.

Nineteen of them withdrew, and another 39 were absent, Lawrence said, the day after a federal judge upheld Alabama's strict new immigration law, which authorizes law enforcement to detain people suspected of not being U.S. citizens and requires schools to ask new enrollees for a copy of their birth certificate.

Even more of the students -- who are U.S. citizens by birth, but their parents may not be -- were expected to leave the state over the weekend, Lawrence said.

"It's been a challenging day, an emotional day. My children have been in tears today. They're afraid," he said. "We have been in crisis-management mode, trying to help our children get over this."

Foley Elementary has the area's largest percentage of Hispanic students, about 20 percent of its student body.

Under the new immigration law, schools must check the citizenship status of any student who enrolls after Sept. 1.

The students must present a birth certificate. Those who cannot do so have 30 days to submit documentation or an affidavit signed by a parent or guardian saying that they are here legally.

If they don't, schools would enter a notation in the statewide computer system saying that no proof of citizenship was provided.

Interim state schools Superintendent Larry Craven sent a letter to local superintendents Thursday detailing that

process. But it remained unclear what might happen after the notation is made in the computer system.

"We just key it in. That's all we do. We are not the enforcers. We just put it in the system. What happens from there, I don't know," Lawrence said.

Federal law states that schooling cannot be denied based on immigration status. Also, Alabama's new law lists public schooling as one of a few things — including immunizations, soup kitchens and prenatal care — that are exempted from proof of citizenship.

On Thursday, Lawrence said he wanted to get a message across to his students that they are safe at Foley Elementary.

He sent out an automated telephone message to all parents, explaining that the law applies only to newly enrolled students and that "no one's going to come here and search through your child's folder to find out if he's legal or not."

Lawrence said that parents are afraid that they'll get arrested and detained, and be cut off from their children.

"Many have made arrangements with American citizens in case they are separated from their children," Lawrence said. "One of our mothers has agreed to accept seven families' worth of children, just in case."

Only 3 percent of the students in Mobile County are Hispanic, and the population is scattered about, so Superintendent Roy Nichols said he doesn't expect the new law to have much of an impact here.

"There is some fear out there," though, he said. "There are probably a few families that will leave."

School employees won't be asked to do any policing, but he said they will have to report students who do not offer up proof of citizenship.

There's "no question" that the schools will follow the law, he said. Some school employees, such as registrars, might feel torn when they sit down with families they know and have to mark that no documentation has been provided.

"Knowing that what they're doing may cause them to be deported may cause them to be in a moral dilemma," he said, "but I would tell them that as long as they're accepting a paycheck from Alabama, they have to follow the law."

Lawrence said he's sad for the families and for these children.

"I can't imagine what I would do if I were in that situation. I'd be pulling my children close to me as well, doing whatever I needed to do," Lawrence said.

"The reality is, that's why they're here. They're here for their children. They want the best for their children, and that's the tragedy in this piece.

"We're going to continue to work with the children who stay here, make this a safe environment for them to learn."

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