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Students Oppose Arizona Copycat Bill

WISCONSIN - The United Council of UW Students, representing over 150,000 students across the University of Wisconsin System, strongly opposes Assembly Bill 173. This bill would create a hostile campus climate for many students because they fear being harassed for not looking "American". The United Council of UW Students has always had a strong stance against all legislation that infringes students' civil liberties. This bill goes against the Wisconsin Idea, and the long tradition of having a university environment that is free of distraction, harassment, and persecution. This prejudicial bill will disproportionately affect students of color on campus, as the bill promotes racial profiling in the attempt to determine immigration status. AB173 goes against the spirit of the United States and our Constitution by not allowing all students the right to due process, regardless of their financial, academic, and immigration status.

Assembly Bill 173 has the potential to severely impact students of color in Wisconsin, as they are more likely to have their immigration status questioned than their white peers. Despite all written attempts to avoid "discrimination based on race or national origin", this bill will clearly lead to racially motivated detentions by authorities. Wisconsin's prominent Asian and Latino immigrant populations will be disproportionately impacted by the passage of this bill. The facts are that people appearing to be of white European descent are far less likely to be asked for documentation upon arrest, while non-white communities will face more scrutiny.

"Students in this state should be free to live, work, and study without having to produce their papers at every turn. Wisconsin's universities are trying to draw in the world's best and brightest students and this bill only serves to discourage them. This bill is either a misguided overreaction to immigration issues, or motivated by racism and intolerance. In either case, it amounts to a huge affront to our civil liberties and our way of life in Wisconsin." said Vice President Dylan Jambrek.

In addition, this bill only takes away from police officer's already limited time and resources by forcing them to investigate immigration status after a minor event, like a traffic stop. This will serve as a distraction to true issues in the state.

The immigration bill from Arizona that Assembly Bill 173 is modeled after has been blocked by Federal district courts, with the ruling being affirmed by the US Court of Appeals. The provisions of the bill that have been stopped are all included in the Wisconsin bill. A law that's unconstitutional in Arizona is still unconstitutional in Wisconsin.

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