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Organizations Across Texas Stress the Damaging Impact of Senate Bill 4 on Vulnerable Populations and Communities

A recording of the press call can be found [here](#)

TEXAS— Ahead of Governor Abbott’s signing of Senate Bill 4, a group of legal experts, advocates, and faith-based organizations across Texas met with national and local press to discuss the legal implications of SB 4 and how the bill will affect thousands of individuals, families, and children seeking refuge and asylum, as well as communities of color across Texas and New Mexico.

During the fourth special legislative session, the Texas House of Representatives passed two anti-immigrant bills, Senate Bill 4 and Senate Bill 3. SB 4 authorizes any and all law enforcement to arrest, and judges to order removed, anyone suspected of having entered Texas without papers. SB 4 is expected to be signed by Governor Abbott soon and will go into effect 91 days after the fourth legislative session ends. During the press call, speakers urged the Department of Justice to step in and immediately halt SB 4’s inherent discrimination from moving forward. A potentially impacted person shared her story and experience as a Texan and community member.

“If signed into law, SB 4 will directly harm people seeking asylum, BIPOC communities, and the core principles of our democracy. In all the partisan politics about immigration, it is imperative that we remember we are human beings too,” said **Katia Elisea-Escobar, a potentially impacted community member with Woori Juntos**. “We have family, friends, dreams, and aspirations too just like everyone else, we want to be happy and be safe. We urge elected officials to recognize that and immediately stop SB 4 from being implemented.”

“Our immigration system is broken, and SB 4 will only make it worse, further oppressing people and driving them into the shadows. If enacted it will unconstitutionally grant state law enforcement the authority to deport people without due process leading to increased racial profiling of Black and Brown communities throughout the state,” said **Adriana Piñon, Legal Director of the ACLU of Texas**. “The suffering Texas leadership is willing to inflict on immigrants in their effort to override federal immigration law should give all Texans, regardless of background or party affiliation, reason for concern. Our communities deserve better than over policing, harassment, and cruelty as policy.”

“Black and Brown people, regardless of citizenship, are already racially profiled and over-policed, and SB 4 empowers local law enforcement to continue trampling on our rights.

Every second of the day Black and Brown communities are criminalized whether that be by ICE, state and local law enforcement, school security, and vigilantes,” said **Tsion Gurmu (she/her), Legal Director at the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI)**. “Historically, criminalization of Black people in the US has been used as a tool to maintain a system of white supremacy. SB 4 and other historic racist policies like Jim Crow, the War on Drugs, 1996 Laws, and Broken Window policies aim to criminalize, sow fear, and limit the movement of Black and Brown people in the US. The only real solution for criminalization is abolition. One of the first steps is divestment from policing and prisons, and investment in models of community driven safety.”

"SB 4 violates the constitutional rights of individuals, disregards the safety of Texas communities and encourages racial profiling and discrimination against people of color," said **Jennifer Babaie, Director of Advocacy and Legal Services at Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center**. "Any legislation that fails to consider the unique needs and experiences of migrant and immigrant communities will only exacerbate the systemic issues that still persist in our country and our immigration system. Organizations across Texas are prepared to use all available resources to safeguard Texas families from SB 4's inherent violations of civil rights. We will not back down."

“Proponents of this bill have long said that it will not impact people across the state, but that is not the reality. The law allows for people, no matter where they entered the United States to be prosecuted. This scheme means that the application of these offenses remains an open possibility across the state - communities from El Paso to Brownsville or even Amarillo,” said **Aron Thorn (he/him), Senior Attorney for the Beyond Borders Program at the Texas Civil Rights Project**. “The real intention of SB 4 is to sow fear and prevent people from living openly in the state of Texas. Any police encounter, whether it is a stop or consensual interaction, could lead to impermissible inquiries into someone’s immigration status and lead them into the deportation pipeline. This law is dangerous and unconstitutional - people do not deserve to live in fear.”

“SB 4 effectively solidifies Operation Lone Star and Texas’ war footing at the border indefinitely. To a community that is over 80pc Mexican American, a community that is one quarter foreign born, a community that over and over again has shown its credentials as a welcoming community, SB 4 is a toxic and insulting threat,” said **Dylan Corbett, Executive Director at the Hope Border Institute**. “The Biden administration needs to take far more active and aggressive action to push back on this law and the entire constitutionally dubious Lone Star Operation.”

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