



Written Testimony Against HB 464
Submitted to the Idaho Senate State Affairs Committee on
March 12, 2024 on behalf of the
American Civil Liberties Union of Idaho

Mr. Chair and Members of the Senate State Affairs Committee:

This written testimony is submitted to the committee on behalf of the ACLU of Idaho in strong opposition to House Bill 464.

Immigrants are a significant part of the stable economic power of Idaho.

Individual immigrant people, working in Idaho, drive Idaho's economy. This is especially true in the agricultural, construction and services sectors. The success and growth of Idaho's dairy industry is not achievable without the contributions of the talented, predominantly Hispanic workforce who has toiled beside Idaho's dairy farm families for generations. 90% of Idaho's 4,400 dairy jobs are filled by Spanish speaking people born outside the U.S. "The population of unauthorized immigrants in Idaho remained stable from 2005 to 2021. There were approximately 35,000 unauthorized immigrants in Idaho **in 2021. This number is the same as in 2005.** More than half of unauthorized immigrants in Idaho remain for at least **16 years.** This is the **longest length of stay in the nation.**" (emphasis added) *The Unauthorized Immigrant Workforce and the Idaho Economy*, University of Idaho McClure Center, 2024.

Idahoans who are immigrants are families and individual people.

Idahoan immigrants are people living in communities together with all Idahoans. We work together. We pray together. We go to school together. We share one another's food. We joke together. We gripe about the state of Idaho's school buildings and potholes together.

The characterization of immigrants coming to Idaho as an invasion is simply untrue.

An invasion is an act of military force by one nation against another. From Merriam Webster: an invasion is "1 : an act of invading, especially : incursion of an army for conquest or plunder, and 2 : the incoming or spread of something usually hurtful." Calling immigration an invasion is a rhetorical strategy used to stoke fear. This was true in the 1870s when "invasion" metaphors were weaponized against Chinese immigrants, and it is

true today. David Bier at the Cato Institute said “...the goal of this nativist language warfare is nothing less than the removal of immigrant rights.” Calling immigration an invasion of Idaho is baldly untrue. Idaho’s unauthorized immigrant community size *has not grown since 2005*.

The characterization of immigrants a source of criminal complaints is simple untrue.

Immigrants, unauthorized and authorized alike, are avoidant of criminal justice attention, for the obvious reason: the desire to not be deported away from family and economic stability. Immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than U.S. born Americans, studies find. NPR March 2024.

HB 464 is a solution looking for a problem

ACLU of Idaho strongly objects to the characterization of immigrants as an existential threat to Idaho or Idahoans. The McClure Center at University of Idaho recently produced a report, submitted with this written testimony, documenting that unauthorized immigrants have comprised a stable number in Idaho *since 2005*. They comprise roughly 35,000 individuals. Their average length of residency in Idaho is *sixteen (16) years*. Per U.S. census reports in July 2023 of Idaho’s total population as 1,964,726, the unauthorized immigrant population comprised a terrifying **01.78%** of the Idahoan population. Unauthorized immigrants work in Idaho businesses, attend Idaho schools and are a part of our faith communities.

The need for an interstate compact to protect Idahoans from an invasion is *hogwash*.

In conclusion, HB 464 proposes a terrible policy that will hurt working and needed Idahoans. Please vote against sending HB 464 out of the Senate State Affairs Committee.

Thank you for your time today and for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Julianne Donnelly Tzul
Advocacy Director
ACLU of Idaho