Arizona’s introduction of anti-immigrant law State Bill 1070 in April 2010 has caused a great stir. The law has come to symbolize both the anger toward new immigrants and states’ frustration that Congress has not acted to fix the nation’s broken immigration policy. It has caused profound divisions in communities and churches both in Arizona and across the nation. United Methodist Women members are already mobilizing in Texas, Missouri, Wyoming and elsewhere to challenge similar anti-immigrant bills that are cropping up in states across the nation. Here’s how you can help.

What Is State Bill 1070?
State Bill 1070 is the Support Our Law Enforcement and Safe Neighborhoods Act signed by Arizona Governor Jan Brewer in April 2010. Under State Bill 1070 legislation, the state of Arizona authorizes local enforcement to ask about immigration status in any situation that enforcement might deem under “reasonable suspicion.” The law was legally challenged by the U.S. Justice Department, and several controversial elements of the law were suspended during litigation. Arizona’s appeal was heard by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco in November 2010 with decision pending. Arizona officials vow to take the fight to the Supreme Court.

Concerns about State Bill 1070 and similar laws:
- The law violates values of fairness, equality and human rights. It targets certain racial and ethnic populations.
- States are taking on immigration policy that is federal responsibility.
- The laws enlist all police in the state in immigration enforcement, with inadequate training.
- The law opens the way for racial profiling by authorizing police to question those who present “reasonable suspicion” of being in the United States without documents.
- The law undermines community safety by building distrust between police and communities.
- Immigrant women facing domestic violence may be unwilling to call the police for help, fearing immigration repercussions.
- The costs to states are high at a time of belt-tightening, including legal challenges and loss of business.
- State laws that open the way to racial profiling violate international human rights standards. For more information visit Restore Fairness at http://restorefairness.org/2011/01/state-must-enact-anti-profiling-laws.

Many states are currently discussing or introducing bills similar to Arizona State Bill 1070, often called “copycat” bills. This broad effort is not coincidental. The Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), the nation’s leading anti-immigrant organization, founded by white nationalist John Tanton, has drafted much of the anti-immigrant legislative language for state and local ordinances and bills through its legal arm, the Immigration Reform Law Institute (IRLI). (For more information visit Imagine 2050 at imagine2050.newcomm.org.) National Public Radio (NPR) recently released a report outlining the connections between the private prison industry, anti-immigrant lobbyists and SB 1070, showing how economic interests increase the pressure for the criminalization of undocumented immigrants. Listen to the broadcast or read the story at www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyid=131191523.
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find out what YOU can do!
Steps you can take:

• Contact your conference social action coordinator to express interest in work on this issue and connect with ongoing efforts.
• See if your conference has a task force on immigration, which is part of a national Rapid Response Team working on this issue. They can help you to get involved and provide updated information and opportunities for action.
• Support bills that would provide in-state tuition for immigrant students as well as other pro-immigrant bills. Call on states to enact anti-profiling laws to come into compliance with international standards as urged by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2010.

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For information on state local immigration initiatives, visit the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) at www.nclr.org/index.php/issues_and_programs/immigration/state_local_immigration_initiatives/arizona-related_legislative_developments.


See the advocacy toolkit “Not in Our State: What Community-Based Organizations Can Do to Combat SB 1070 Copycat Legislation” created by the National Council of La Raza and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. It includes excellent talking points. Download at www.advancingequality.org. NCLR regularly updates a “Legislative Landscape” of state anti-immigrant action.
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