

ILLINOIS COALITION FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

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Mark Kirk and Immigration

Public Statements and Legislative Record



Public Statements – Anti-Mexican, Anti-Muslim

- **Kirk claimed that distributing free condoms to Mexico would curb immigration.** Kirk proposed distributing free contraceptives to Mexico to curb illegal immigration. He said, “A slower rate of growth of Mexico's population would improve the economy of Mexico. It would also reduce the environmental pressure on Mexico's ecosystem. But a slower rate of growth would also reduce the long-term illegal immigration pressure on America's borders.” [[Reuters, 6/22/07](http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN2247538320070622) <http://www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN2247538320070622>]
- **Kirk endorsed the idea of racial profiling at airports.** Kirk made the following comment during a technology forum at Northwestern University: “I’m OK with discrimination against young Arab males from terrorist-producing states. I think that when we look at the threat that’s out there, young men between, say, the ages of 18 and 25 from a couple of countries, I believe a certain amount of intense scrutiny should be placed on them.” The remark drew widespread criticism from Arab and Muslim groups, as well as condemnations from Senator Obama and Congresswoman Schakowsky. (“Profiling 'them' for terrorism will not make 'us' safer,” [Chicago Tribune, 11/28/05](http://www.chicagotribune.com); Associated Press, 11/9/05)
- **Kirk Dismissed High Number of Uninsured, Blaming It On Illegal Immigrants.** While addressing the Wheeling Republicans about the healthcare crisis, Kirk dismissed concerns, saying that of the "47 million they tell you" are uninsured, "they're including illegal aliens. Do you think the taxpayers should pay for healthcare for illegal aliens? Well that knocks 15 million off right there." However, the National Institute for Health Care Management reports that approximately 5.6 million illegal immigrants are currently without health insurance. [Mark Kirk, Wheeling Township Republican Meeting, 5/12/08; "Understanding the Uninsured," National Institute for Health Care Management, April 2008] [Audio Clip](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGu6nNYNPYk) and <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FGu6nNYNPYk>

Legislative Record – Act Tough, No Solutions

- **Kirk Voted in favor of HR 4437, Sensenbrenner Bill, the most anti-immigrant piece of legislation in recent history.** The bill included only enforcement provisions, including building a 700-mile wall on the US-Mexico border; making being undocumented in the US a federal felony and barring anyone convicted of this felony from ever gaining legal status; and making subjecting to federal prosecution anyone who aids an undocumented immigrant in remaining in the US—which could include clergy, doctors, teachers, and family members. [House Vote 661, HR 4437, 12/16/05, Passed 239-182 R 203-17 D 36-164]

- **Kirk changes his vote based on political popularity; Once against Tom Tancredo, now in favor.** Kirk voted against two amendments offered by anti-immigration congressman Tom Tancredo in 2003 forcing local police to do ICE's work to seek and detain immigrants. However, in 2007 Kirk voted for identical legislation also sponsored by Tancredo because attacking immigrants had become more politically popular. [HR 2555, House Vote 309, 6/24/03; HR 2799, House Vote 409, 7/22/03; HR 2638, House Vote 385, 6/15/07]
- **Kirk Voted to Encourage State and Local Authorities to Deport Immigrants.** In 2005, Kirk voted for an amendment that would have turned state and local police loose to enforce immigration law, and required DHS to provide training. [House Vote 185, HR 1817, 5/18/05, approved 242-185 R 216-11 D 26-173]
- **Kirk Introduces Redundant Deportation Bill That Allows for Racial Profiling.** The *Alien Gang Removal Act* of 2009 includes language for the removal of immigrant criminals that *already exists* in federal law. More importantly, the loose definition of "street gang" allows for the racial profiling and arrest of a handful minority men who could be just be sitting on their front stoop. The purpose of this bill is to demonize immigrants and look tough when in reality there is no solution being presented to our overall problem of immigration reform. ([Lake County News Sun, 03/24/09](#))

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- **REAL ID Act (HR 418)** REAL ID, which became law, is forcing states to restrict driver's licenses to those residents who can provide documentation of their immigration status—creating huge state costs to change their procedures and set up large (and error-prone) databases, all the while imperiling public safety by pushing drivers who should be tested, licensed, and insured out of the licensing system. (House passage: roll call vote 31, 2/10/05; final passage: roll call 161, 5/5/05)
 - **Secure Fence Act (HR 6061):** This bill, which became law, authorized construction of 700 miles of border barrier, at \$2 million per mile. This bill did nothing to address the causes of immigration, but only further encouraged ways to evade barriers. Worse, it sent an ugly message to both our southern neighbors and Latino communities in the US that they were not welcome. Roll call vote 446, 9/14/06
 - **Community Protection Act (HR 6094)** This bill would have enabled immigration authorities to keep an immigrant detained indefinitely, even if the immigrant hasn't been charged or convicted of any crime, with limited recourse. It also purported to crack down on immigrant gang members, creating guilt by association for immigrants who have not been involved in or accused of any actual crimes. Roll call vote 465, 9/21/06
 - **Immigration Law Enforcement Act (HR 6095)** This bill would have further encouraged local and state police authorities to engage in immigration enforcement, and thus discouraged immigrant communities from cooperating with police in reporting and solving crimes. Roll call vote 468, 9/21/06

Want to Take Action? Call Juan Jose Gonzalez at 312.332.7360 x 236 or email at jgonzalez@icirr.org

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