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Carr to push immigration plan

Says he will introduce legislation in Jan.

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Written by
Sam Stockard

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"We've been very, very specific," Carr said. "As a result, we have not had a single lawsuit filed against us. I maintain Tennessee has the strongest enforceable immigration laws in the country with respect to the states."

But the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition based in Nashville pointed out that the "show me your papers" provision has been criticized by law enforcement and constitutional law experts who say it would be difficult to enforce "in a race-neutral manner."

"It's unfortunate that a handful of representatives are taking the Supreme Court's decision as a green light to pursue their anti-immigrant agenda next session," said Eben Cathey, spokesman for the coalition. "Tennesseans rejected an Arizona copycat bill last session, not because of a pending Supreme Court decision, but because it's bad for Tennessee. This demonstrates how out of touch a few legislators are with Tennessee.

"Furthermore, if they think the court affirmed SB 1070 as good public policy, they should read the high court's opinion."

Federal hurdle

Tennessee is hamstrung on enforcement, Carr said, because local jails have a 72-hour deadline for holding any illegal immigrant arrested. If the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement doesn't pick them up in that time frame, local jails have to release them, he said.

According to an Associated Press report, Department of Homeland

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Security officials said this week they directed immigration enforcement in Arizona not to deport illegal immigrants using the state law unless they are prioritized as dangerous criminals, frequent violators or recent border crossers.

“What we’ve got is an uncooperative federal government in enforcing law,” Carr said Wednesday, noting the scenario puts Tennessee jails in an unnecessary financial burden.

Carr, who is running against Ryan Harring in the Republican primary, believes Tennessee needs to enact laws to protect its residents because the federal government isn’t enforcing the law. Carr contends Tennessee has about 150,000 illegal immigrants who are costing about $450 million annually for health care, education and the judicial system.

Harring said Carr’s solution to problems is spending more of taxpayers’ money.

“Joe Carr hasn’t done enough to combat illegal immigration and should be doing more to stop the handouts to illegal immigrants. As the taxpayer’s friend, I will make ‘demagnetizing’ Tennessee a priority when elected,” he said.

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— Sam Stockard, 615-278-5165

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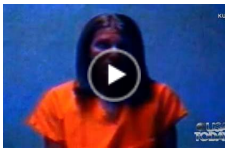

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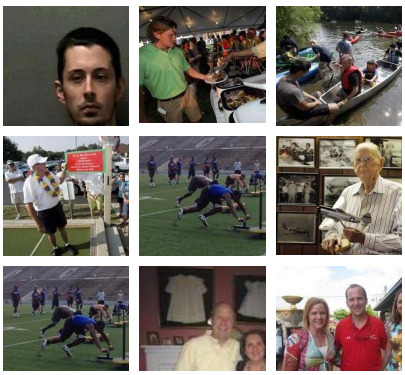

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