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TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 2013

IMMIGRATION Anti-Immigrant Bills Lurk in Legislature Again This Session

POSTED BY JEFF WOODS ON TUE, MAR 19, 2013 AT 11:05 AM

Representatives of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition are fanning out across the Capitol today with the stated purpose of meeting with lawmakers to "discuss policies to make Tennessee a more welcoming, inclusive state for everyone." Ha! That's a knee-slapper. As we all know, the Republican supermajority is about making Tennessee a more welcoming place for white Christian families, period. Love it or leave it!

Two anti-immigrant bills are on tomorrow's legislative committee agenda: One by Sen. Stacey Campfield and Rep. Mike Sparks is an English-only driver's license measure. It would eliminate translations of driving exams, sending a decidedly unwelcome message to the international community and hindering the operations of major state employers such as Volkswagen.

Another by Sen. Bill Ketron and Rep. Rick Womick requires the Tennessee Office of Refugees to reimburse the state for the cost of a refugee child's public education.

"Whether a child is from Arkansas or Somalia, educating children is an investment in our state, not a burden," says the refugee rights coalition's Eben Cathey in a message to supporters. "In a mean-spirited effort to pit vulnerable communities against each other, the sponsors of this bill included a provision to give the money they take from refugees to persons with disabilities. "



Houston Chronicle / Johnny Hanson

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