

Arizona Dem: Federal Agencies Nixing Conventions Over State's Immigration Law

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Two federal agencies have joined the "boycott Arizona" trend and nixed conferences there out of concern over the state's immigration law, a Democratic Arizona congresswoman said, calling the development "very troubling."

The cancellations by the Department of Education and the U.S. Border Patrol may have been more out of a desire to steer clear of controversy than outright protest of the law. But Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, who has written to dozens of cities and groups in a campaign to persuade them to end their boycotts, said it was disturbing to learn that the federal government would withdraw from the state over the issue.

"It is very troubling when the federal government becomes involved in a boycott against our state," Giffords said in a written statement. "Although I personally disagree with the immigration law, it came about because of growing frustration over the federal government's unwillingness to secure the border. The federal government's participation in this boycott only adds to that frustration."

FoxNews.com is awaiting response from both agencies. Giffords' office said the cancellations were confirmed by the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association.

According to Giffords, the Education Department canceled a convention set for October at a [Tucson](#) resort after the Mexican government said it would not send any representatives to the meeting. The department then moved the event to Minnesota.

Further, her office said the Border Patrol canceled a conference set for May at a resort in Prescott after an official asked that it be moved out of concern over the immigration law debate. The Border Patrol -- which has more than 4,000 agents in Arizona, representing nearly a quarter of its force -- had booked 40 rooms for the event before canceling.

Giffords is among a number of Arizona officials who argue that the boycotts imposed by cities across the country do nothing to change the law and only punish workers and [businesses](#) there. The boycotts would hit the hospitality industry, which is made up in large part of Hispanic workers, particularly hard.

In the letter she has been sending to cities and groups that have imposed boycotts, Giffords wrote that the punitive measures have "unfairly targeted" her state's businesses.

The Obama administration is planning to file suit against the Arizona law, citing its sustained concern about the move to subject some residents to routine checks on their immigration status.

So far, a couple of cities have written Giffords back defending their actions against her state.

El Paso Mayor John Cook wrote in a letter to the congresswoman June 10 that his city was not "condoning" illegal immigration by passing a resolution that prohibits city officials from attending conferences in Arizona. He said his city's measure, though not a full-fledged boycott, emphasizes the importance of passing a comprehensive immigration overhaul and "expresses our concerns with the possibility of law enforcement racially profiling people."

Austin Mayor Lee Leffingwell also wrote this month that its ban on [employee](#) travel to the state -- and a reconsideration of city contracts there -- was imposed out of concern for racial profiling.