



California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative

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Office of Immigrant Affairs (SB 1267) – FACT SHEET

As home to the largest immigrant population in the country, it is critical that California invest now in the successful integration of its immigrants. California's immigrants are eager to fully participate in the economic, cultural and political life of their newly adopted home, however many lack the appropriate tools or information to do so. **SB 1267 (Cedillo)** will ensure that California continues to reap the economic and cultural benefits of its immigrant communities by facilitating their successful integration into the fabric of our state.

What the bill does:

SB 1267 (Cedillo), sponsored by Senator Gil Cedillo and **the California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative (CIWC)** would establish an Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) within the Department of Community Services and Development to ensure the integration and civic participation of new citizens in the state. The OIA would 1) coordinate existing state programs and services for immigrants 2) act as a repository of information on immigrant issues and affairs within our state, 3) advocate and promote cooperation and understanding between government agencies and immigrant citizens, and 4) ensure that immigrants receive the assistance they need, including citizenship assistance, in order to promote their full integration into our society.

California's changing demographics point to the necessity for an Office of Immigrant Affairs that builds upon the strengths of immigrants and their families and expedites their journey towards self-sufficiency.

- One in four California residents is foreign born, a rate higher than any other state in the United States.¹
- Immigrants and their children comprise nearly half of our state's population and live in virtually all of California's 58 counties.²
- There are currently 2.7 million immigrants eligible to naturalize in California and several million more who will soon become eligible to naturalize, adding to the base of voters who are naturalized immigrants.³
- States with smaller immigrant populations like Illinois and Utah already have state-funded offices dedicated to immigrant and/or ethnic affairs. The time is right for California to coordinate its fragmented approach to immigrant policies and programs in California.

An investment in California's immigrants today will benefit the state in the future.

- Immigrants comprise a third of California's labor force in key economic sectors, including services (40%) manufacturing (45%) and farm labor (90%).⁴
- Immigrants are among California's most productive entrepreneurs. In San Jose alone, immigrant owners of technology companies created more than 58,000 jobs and generated more than \$17 billion in sales during the late 1990s. Google, Sun Microsystems, eBay, and Yahoo! are all companies that were founded or co-founded by immigrants.⁵

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. Census 2000 Brief. *The Foreign Born Population: 2000*. Issued 12/03.

² U.S. Census Bureau. 2000. www.census.gov

³ Michael Fix. Jeffrey S. Passel, and Kenneth Sucher. "Trends in Naturalization", Immigrant Families and Workers: Facts and Perspectives Brief No. 3. Urban Institute. September 2003.

⁴ Auerhahn, Louise and Bob Brownstein. 2004. *The Economic Effects of Immigration in Santa Clara County and California*. Working Partnerships USA.

⁵ Saxenian, Annalee. 2002. *Local and Global Networks of Immigrant Professionals in Silicon Valley*. Public Policy Institute of California: San Francisco.