

Statement on Immigration

With the Governor's signing yesterday, the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act (SB529) marks the beginning of a new chapter for both businesses and immigrants in Georgia.

As the preeminent advocate for Georgia's thriving Hispanic business community, the Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce (GHCC) believes that SB529 strikes a reasonable balance between the state's and business owners' commercial interests, citizens' security concerns and the integrity of state public services. It also better enables law enforcement to protect those who might be victimized by the despicable practice of human trafficking.

Governor Purdue has noted that immigration is ultimately a national issue, but the provisions in SB529 give us all the opportunity to contribute on a statewide level to protecting Georgia citizens and public services. In that light, we are pleased that the bill also provides compassionate protection for those who gain entry and residency to this country through appropriate legal means.

However, extreme care must be taken to apply the law with precision so that individuals who follow the rule of law or other "innocents" are not caught up in its net or in a potential anti-immigrant backlash. They may come from outside our borders – as do many of GHCC's members – but they are hard working, talented, dedicated individuals committed to bettering themselves, their families and their communities and deserving of due process and all appropriate protections provided by state and federal statutes.

The Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce remains steadfastly committed to its goals of expanding and leveraging the potential of the Hispanic business community – a goal that goes hand in hand with protecting businesses, our borders, our citizens and those who wish to join our communities.