# Louisiana Lawmakers Approve Migrant Enforcement Bill Similar to Texas Law



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On May 22, 2024, Louisiana lawmakers approved a bill granting state and local law enforcement the authority to arrest and jail individuals who have entered the U.S. illegally. This legislation, headed by Sen. Valarie Hodges, is set to be considered by Governor Landry, a Republican and outspoken supporter of state-level migrant enforcement.

If enacted, the bill would criminalize "illegal entry or reentry" into Louisiana, imposing penalties of up to one year in prison and a $4,000 fine for a first offense, and up to two years in prison and a $10,000 fine for subsequent offenses. The legislation also initiates the deportation process for those convicted.

Louisiana's bill follows a pattern seen in other GOP-led states, such as Texas, Iowa, and Oklahoma, which have passed similar measures. However, these laws are facing significant legal challenges. Texas' migrant enforcement law, for example, was only enforced for a brief period in March before being halted by a federal appeals court.

Critics argue that such state-level immigration laws encroach on federal authority and violate constitutional principles, whereas proponents claim they are necessary for protecting U.S. citizens. The Biden administration maintains that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility and that these state laws are illegal.

The fate of Louisiana's bill depends on the outcomes of ongoing legal battles, particularly regarding Texas' migrant enforcement law, which awaits a ruling from a federal appeals court.