

## Question #2

Should the state of Illinois promote and provide funding for educational programs and materials that seek to inform immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented, of their rights in the workplace?

### Facts:

- Federal law provides that employers may not lawfully employ undocumented workers.
- Undocumented workers are legally permitted to unionize.
- Aliens are generally entitled to the same protections against anti-discrimination as those of U.S. citizens.
- Immigrants are estimated to annually earn 240 billion dollars, pay 90 billion a year in taxes and use 5 billion a year in public benefits.
- Immigrant workers have filled the need for low skilled labor in food service, construction, and cleaning services. Pew Hispanic Center Study (3/17/06) reported that undocumented workers filled 25% of agriculture jobs and 17% of office and cleaning jobs. There are 7.2 million undocumented workers in the U. S. work force. 56% are Mexican
- Numerous studies have found that immigrants actually create more jobs than they fill.
- The federal government in 2006 reported 6-7 billion dollars in Social Security contributions in an “earnings suspense file”, an account for W-2 forms that cannot be matched to correct Social Security numbers.

### Pro:

1. Because of their precarious legal status, undocumented workers are candidates for abuse as they feel they have no recourse.
2. Sub-minimum wage work depresses the labor condition of all workers.
3. While immigrant workers are generally entitled to the same protections against anti-discrimination as U.S. citizens in the workplace, they may not be aware of these protections.

### Con:

1. Such a program would entail some costs.
2. Providing undocumented workers with information about their rights, may cause animosity between them and their non-immigrant workers co-workers.