



# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE/JACL

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## PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release.

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## JACL JOINS LAWSUIT

**Washington, D.C.** -- The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) joined with other national civil rights groups in filing a lawsuit against the implementation of SB 1070, the recently signed Arizona law that authorizes local law enforcement officers to detain those who may be suspected to be in this country without legal authorization. This lawsuit challenges the new Arizona law that was recently passed through the Arizona State Legislature and signed into law by Arizona Governor Brewer.

The JACL has expressed strong opposition to the legislation because it is seen as open season for local law enforcement officers to prey upon people of color, particularly the Hispanic population who are often the target of discriminatory detention practices of local police. Asian Americans, who have seen a long history of anti-immigrant politics, also fear the threat of detention simply because this group of American people are often mistaken for visiting foreigners.

Floyd Mori, the National Executive Director of the JACL stated today that, "Japanese Americans are all too familiar with law enforcement actions that have targeted their communities simply because of their ethnicity and nothing else. While there are alleged protections in the new law, we have seen the terrible impact of over zealous law enforcement who ignored the basic protections of the Constitution in the past. It was wrong to racial profile then and it is wrong today."

The National JACL President, Larry Oda commented, "We feel it our duty and obligation to stand with our friends in the civil rights area to challenge the Constitutional validity of this new law. JACL members are at risk because Asian Americans are often seen as the perpetual foreigner and assumed to be immigrants when many are now fourth and fifth generation Americans."

Among the other national organizations that have joined in the lawsuit are the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, the Mexican Legal Defense and Education Fund, the NAACP, the ACLU, and many other groups and individuals. The Obama Administration has also indicated serious reservations about the new law and is actively looking at its legality.

The JACL is the largest and oldest Asian American civil and human rights organization in the country. There are over 100 chapters throughout the United States including their Arizona chapter. The JACL held its national convention in Arizona in 2006. The members of their Arizona chapter are part of a coalition of concerned citizens who have been actively engaged in opposing the law.

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