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May 2, 2016

Members of the Arizona State Legislature
Capitol Complex
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Members:

I am writing on behalf of Los Abogados, the Arizona Hispanic Bar Association. We represent private and public attorneys, judges, businesspeople, paralegals, and law students with the mission of enhancing the legal profession by promoting diversity, improving the quality and administration of legal services, encouraging education in the Latino community, supporting the just application of Civil Rights, and advocating for the Latino community. After careful review of Senate Bill 1377, we encourage you not to pass this bill.

We believe Senate Bill 1377 will have a significant detrimental impact on Arizona's criminal justice system. While from time to time certain crimes have been deemed so heinous that mitigating factors have been removed as an option of the Court in sentencing, never before has our system eliminated mitigating factors based on an individual characteristic, such as immigration status. Here, Senate Bill 1377 would prohibit a court from considering mitigating factors based solely on an individual's immigration status, without consideration for the offense committed or other surrounding circumstances. Senate Bill 1377 does not promote fairness or confidence in the rule of law; it does not reflect the spirit of Arizona's criminal justice system.

Furthermore, this improper shift in policy, the targeting of individuals because of their immigration status, would have a disparate impact on Latinos in Arizona. Our State's reputation was tarnished in 2010 with passage of SB1070, negatively impacting local businesses, and causing others to question whether they cared to relocate here. Our organization and many others have worked hard to reverse the negative impact of SB1070. We fear that Senate Bill 1377 will undermine those efforts and once again draw this unwanted attention to our State and impact the economic growth we so desperately need.

For the reasons above, and myriad others not addressed here, we encourage you to not support Senate Bill 1377.

Sincerely,

Jessica S. Sanchez

Jessica Sanchez
President
Los Abogados Hispanic Bar Association