



– FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE –
PRESS RELEASE

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The Hispanic Bar Association of St. Louis¹ (“HBastl”) supports the International Institute of St. Louis, which has provided opportunities for immigrants and refugees to thrive, creating a welcoming, prosperous and healthy region for all since its founding in 1919. HBastl condemns in the strongest terms possible any efforts by the St. Charles County Council to misinform, mischaracterize, and vilify Latin American migrants who enjoy **LAWFUL PRESENCE** in the United States and who seek only the opportunity to avail themselves of the American Dream.

St. Charles County Council Resolution 23-08 entitled, “A Resolution Opposing the Importation of Illegal Immigrants into the Region,” is at best an uninformed pronouncement based on clearly erroneous statements of fact and Law, or at worst a proclamation promoting and supporting xenophobic and racist attitudes against Latin American migrants as well as United States Citizens of Latin American descent based on willful ignorance of the facts and the Law. The St. Charles County Council should reject it outright.

The HBA believes the best antidote to this type of misinformed xenophobia, racism, and willful ignorance is to state facts in furtherance of educating our decision-makers.

Consider:

FACT: The Latin American migrants to which Resolution 23-08 specifically refers **ARE NOT** “illegal aliens” as stated in the Resolution.

FACT: The Latin American migrants to which Resolution 23-08 refers are what United States immigration law calls “**parolees**.”

FACT: United States immigration law uses the legal term “**parolee**” to refer to a **LEGAL ENTRY** to the United States and is **NOT** to be confused with any criminal process.²

FACT: Parolees enjoy **LEGAL PRESENCE** in the United States.³

FACT: Section 212(d)(5)(A) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act as codified in the United States Code at 8 U.S.C. §212(d)(5)(A) is a Law passed by the U.S. Congress.⁴

FACT: Section 212(d)(5)(A) as codified in the United States Code at 8 U.S.C. §1182(d)(5)(A)) provides the Attorney General discretion to make parole decisions.⁵

¹ The Hispanic Bar Association of St. Louis was founded in 2012 and is a 501 (c)(6) organization (<https://hbastl.org/>).

² https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/humanitarian_parole

³ *Id.*

⁴ <https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/8/212.5>

⁵ <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2020-title8/html/USCODE-2020-title8-chap12-subchapII-partII-sec1182.htm>

FACT: The Code of Federal Regulations (“C.F.R.”) is the codification of the general and permanent regulations promulgated by the executive departments and agencies of the federal government of the United States.⁶

FACT: Title 8 Section 274a.12(c)(11) of the C.F.R. permits parolees to apply for work authorization in the United States of America.⁷

FACT: On January 5, 2023, based on the above Law and on the success of the humanitarian parole program for Ukrainians fleeing Russia’s brutal and illegal war against Ukraine, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (“USCIS”) announced a similar program for “safe and orderly pathways to the United States” for up to 30,000 nationals of Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela to permit qualified individuals from those four countries to apply for “humanitarian parole.” They must have a private financial sponsor in the U.S. and pass a background check, and if accepted as a humanitarian parolee, they may come to the U.S. for a period of two years to **LIVE and WORK LEGALLY**.⁸

FACT: A vast majority of the migrants to which Resolution 23-08 refers are from Venezuela who have fled the brutal, dictatorial regimes of Hugo Chávez and, since Chávez’ death in 2013, Nicolás Maduro – tyrants whose governments stand accused and are currently under investigation by the International Criminal Court for Human Rights abuses which may constitute Crimes against Humanity committed since at least 2017, including extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary detentions, deprivation of physical liberty, rape, and other forms of sexual violence, as well as persecution on political grounds.⁹

FACT: The most recent presentation of evidence before the International Criminal Court was filed October 27, 2023 against members of the Venezuelan National Primary Commission, for Persecution as a Crime against Humanity.¹⁰

FACT: Since 2015, more than 7 million Venezuelans have emigrated due to ongoing economic and political turmoil, including shortages of food, medicine and essential services. According to the United Nations Refugee Agency, the Venezuelan exodus is the largest exodus in Latin America’s recent history – representing close to a quarter of Venezuela’s population – and the world’s second-largest refugee crisis. Moreover, the exodus shows little sign of slowing, an estimated 2,000 Venezuelans still leaving that country every day, the vast majority of Venezuelans, (6 million as of March 2023) hosted by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.¹¹

FACT: Regional business organizations, including Hispanic businesses from St. Charles County, have expressed concern about the decreasing population in the Region and their ability to attract qualified workers.¹²

FACT: The Latino population in Missouri contributed 3.5% of the Gross Domestic Income (GDI) to the economic structure of the State, according to the 2023 LDC U.S. Latino GDP Report.¹³

FACT: It is in the interests of the Region to receive and welcome these people as they flee extreme hardship and political oppression in their Country of Origin.¹⁴

⁶ [https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/about.html#:~:text=The%20Code%20of%20Federal%20Regulations%20\(CFR\)%20is%20the%20codification%20of,areas%20subject%20to%20Federal%20regulation.](https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/cfr/about.html#:~:text=The%20Code%20of%20Federal%20Regulations%20(CFR)%20is%20the%20codification%20of,areas%20subject%20to%20Federal%20regulation.)

⁷ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-8/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-274a>

⁸ <https://www.uscis.gov/CHNV>

⁹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-36319877>; <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/instability-venezuela>; <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/venezuela>; <https://www.wola.org/analysis/sexual-violence-against-detained-women-in-venezuela-a-government-strategy/>

¹⁰ <https://x.com/eldiario/status/1719050932523040975?t=PCpjNGpHVfvftchJD-YHVA&s=08>

¹¹ See Footnote 9.

¹² <https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/understanding-missouri-labor-market>

¹³ <https://www.stlpr.org/economy-business/2019-11-27/growing-community-in-st-charles-county-propels-latino-entrepreneurship.>

¹⁴ <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnmbpcjpcglclefindmkaj/https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/nae-mo-report.pdf>

FACT: Governor Mike Parson supports efforts for legal immigrants to succeed in the U.S., stating in 2018: “This will always be a nation of immigrants. It is the one common trait we all share. Immigrants have and will continue to have an important role in Missouri and the United States.”¹⁵

FACT: In 2019, Governor Parson stated in a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, “Missouri has a long and rich history of immigration, dating back to America’s earliest explorers, fur traders, and missionaries... Today, Missouri’s population includes thousands of refugees who have become vital members of our communities,” he added, noting that the state has resettled 18,000 from 45 countries since 2002. Further, Missouri will “continue to work hard to ensure refugees become a thriving part of our communities, and I am confident this demonstration of compassion will mark the first step in these immigrants becoming patriotic and productive fellow Americans.”¹⁶

FACT: According to the American Immigration Council, Immigrants in Missouri¹⁷:

1) Have contributed billions of dollars in taxes:

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$1.9 billion in federal taxes and \$790.8 million in state and local taxes in 2018.
- Undocumented immigrants in Missouri paid an estimated \$107.1 million in federal taxes and \$62.3 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2018.
- Missouri [DACA recipients](#) and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated \$7.4 million in state and local taxes in 2018.

2) Add billions of dollars to Missouri’s economy as consumers, as immigrant-led households had \$6.8 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2018.

3) Generate hundreds of millions of dollars in business revenue as entrepreneurs:

- 14,795 immigrant business owners accounted for 5 percent of all self-employed Missouri residents in 2018 and generated \$397.7 million in business income.
- In 2018, immigrants accounted for 14 percent of business owners in Kansas City (which spans Kansas and Missouri) and 3 percent of business owners in the St. Louis metropolitan area (which extends from Missouri into Illinois).

CONCLUSION: For all of these reasons and consistent with its mission, the Hispanic Bar Association of St. Louis resists efforts to impede but rather, fully supports, the important work of the International Institute of St. Louis. The HBastl Board of Directors recommends our political leaders to adopt resolutions embracing and welcoming immigrants from various countries of origin, especially those who have undertaken treacherous journeys to flee tyrannical, authoritarian governments around the world, as this is also consistent with our Nation’s history.

By rejecting Resolution 23-08, the St. Charles County Council will send an unequivocal statement that xenophobic, racist, and hateful rhetoric has no place in American political discourse.

Accordingly, we, the Board of Directors of the HBastl, urge the St. Charles County Council to **REJECT** Resolution 23-08 as xenophobic, racist, and inciteful of potential violence against our fellow Citizens.

¹⁵ <https://governor.mo.gov/press-releases/archive/governor-parson-provides-update-missouri-national-guard-troops-border>

¹⁶ <https://thehill.com/homenews/state-watch/476408-missouri-governor-says-state-will-accept-refugees/>

¹⁷ <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/missouri/#:~:text=of%20immigrant%20entrepreneurs-,TAXES%20%26%20SPENDING%20POWER,communities%20as%20consumers%20and%20taxpayers.>