

## VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION TASK FORCE

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### Mission Statement

Throughout our history, immigrants have come to our country to realize their potential in a land of freedom, stability, and security. Through hard work and dedication to our founding principles, immigrants have forged a new nation unlike any before it. The result is a national character and prosperity that are the envy of the world.

Today we are engaged in a national discussion about the nature and volume of future immigration to this country. Much of the focus of this discussion has centered on that immigration which is in violation of federal law. Immigration, legal and illegal alike, has historically been viewed as a responsibility of the federal government. In recent years, however, debate over illegal immigration has spilled over into the individual states. Indeed, a considerable amount of legislative measures aimed at addressing various aspects of illegal immigration has been proposed to the General Assembly of Virginia. While such legislation has often raised a host of legal and practical issues, its prevalence has served to demonstrate the interest in the issue that many Virginians hold.

While a state's role in the enforcement of federal immigration law may be the subject of debate, a state's duty to provide for the safety of its citizens is not. The Virginia State Crime Commission was created to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection. The Commission's Illegal Immigration Task Force, therefore, will endeavor to study the impact of illegal immigration on Virginia's criminal justice system. The scope of this endeavor, by its very words, is limited in two respects. First and foremost, a distinction is made at the outset between immigration which is legal and that which is illegal, with only the latter being relevant to the Task Force's endeavor. Second, the Task Force will focus its study on the impact of that illegal immigration on the criminal justice system.

The Task Force launches this endeavor with no premature determinations. The nexus between illegal immigration and crime is not assumed but, rather, will be the subject of review. The Task Force will focus its review on crime by and against illegal immigrants, the cost of illegal immigration on Virginia's criminal justice system, and what measures may effectively be taken at the state and local levels of government. The Task Force will consider and present recommendations to the Crime Commission that range from legislation to community-based programs. It is intended that efforts will be made to ensure that any recommendations be accurately communicated to Virginia's immigrant communities so that misunderstanding and misinformation do not give way to fear and disassociation.

The Illegal Immigration Task Force is composed of highly-qualified individuals from across Virginia. The group is diverse in its experience and will be expected to study the issue from a variety of perspectives. The Task Force members will engage in an open and honest discussion of the issue for it is only through a frank discussion that the public safety of all Virginia communities will be served.