

## Thursday's letters: Civil liberties threatened

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Your June 22 editorial "Ineffective immigration laws" rightly criticized political gestures that masquerade as attempts to reform our broken immigration laws.

The American Civil Liberties Union and other civil rights groups have filed a class-action lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for Arizona challenging Arizona's new law requiring police to demand "papers" from people they stop whom they suspect are not authorized to be in the U.S. The extreme law violates the Constitution's equal protection guarantee and prohibition on unreasonable seizures, invites the racial profiling of people of color, violates the First Amendment and interferes with federal law.

The ACLU strongly supports responsible reforms to U.S. immigration policy; at the same time, we urge our elected officials to ensure that any legislation protects the civil liberties of everyone in the United States, regardless of immigration status, as our Constitution guarantees.

It is not only civil liberties advocates who oppose Arizona's immigration law and copycat measures. Many law enforcement groups around the U.S. — including in South Carolina — oppose discriminatory laws because they divert resources from the important task of protecting public safety, and they imperil cooperation between the police and the immigrant community.

The business community in Arizona and elsewhere rightly worry about the impact of such laws on potential visitors, customers and investors. Even visitors from neighboring states who enter Arizona may be asked to "show their papers." For example, a New Mexico driver's license doesn't qualify as adequate proof of legal residence under the Arizona law.

Anyone traveling to Arizona to visit our national landmarks or spend some vacation time this summer should pack not only a camera, sunscreen and sunglasses but also a pocket copy of the Constitution.

*Victoria Middleton*

*Executive director, ACLU of South Carolina*

### QUITE A 'CATCH'

Can we set aside the local politics frenzy and gay rights dissertations long enough to applaud the hilarious "Land Shark" photograph on the front page of the July 1 Upstate section of the Herald-Journal?

I just want staff photographer Mike Bonner to know he made my week. What a "catch" for his camera!

*Leslie Montagne*

*Spartanburg*



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