

State lawmakers tackle immigration issue

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- The failure of Congress to pass a U.S. immigration reform measure has sparked action on the issue in state legislatures across the country. The National Conference of State Legislatures says there has been an unprecedented surge in state-level lawmaking on the immigration issue, The New York Times reported Monday. According to the conference, 170 immigration bills were enacted by state legislatures in 2006 representing double the number that passed the previous year. The laws enacted included measures curbing the employment of illegal immigrants and making it more difficult for them to obtain state identification documents like driver's licenses. On the other side, some states adopted measures that extended education and healthcare benefits to the children of illegal immigrants. "The states are stepping up to the plate and doing what they can, because not to act would be irresponsible," said State Sen. Leticia Van de Putte of Texas, the president of the conference.

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