

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
NORTHEASTERN DIVISION**

Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama, et al.,

Plaintiffs,

v.

Governor Robert Bentley, et al.,

Defendants.

Case No. 5:11-cv-02484-SLB

**Exhibits in Support of
Plaintiffs' Motion For
Preliminary Injunction
And Memorandum In
Support**

Exhibit 13

Declaration of Matt Webster

DECLARATION OF MATT WEBSTER

I, MATT WEBSTER, make this declaration based on my own personal knowledge and if called to testify I could and would do so competently as follows:

1. I was born in Tuscaloosa, Alabama in 1967. I have lived in Alabama most of my life and am a graduate of the University of Alabama. I have been married to my wife for 11 years. I work as an engineer for a steel mill.

2. A few years back, my wife and I were considering adopting a child. I asked one of my friends about possibly adopting a child from Mexico and learned that he knew of two children in the U.S. whose mother had passed away and were in need of a stable home. The children were extended relatives of his and had been moved around the U.S. among different relatives and one child was struggling in school. Over the next year or so, my wife and I met the children several times, and we grew to love them as our own sons.

3. My wife and I felt that we could give the boys a stable and loving home in which they could both thrive, and their extended relatives agreed. We obtained guardianship over the children, and are currently in the process of finalizing the adoption paperwork. The children are brothers and are ages 11 and 16. They were not born in the U.S. and are not lawfully present.

4. The adoption process is very complicated. I have been working with an adoption attorney and I recently hired an immigration attorney as well. At each

turn, I have been surprised by the all the steps involved in adoption. We recently had a home visit from the Alabama Department of Human Resources and my understanding is that the adoption should be final sometime in July or August. After the adoption is final there is still a two year waiting period until we can petition for legal permanent resident status for the boys.

5. I am fearful of what could happen to the two boys, who I now consider my sons, during the next year if HB56 goes into effect. They do not have and they are not eligible for any federal alien registration documents, and until we petition for them in two years, they would be “criminals” under this law. This is so cruel and mean. My boys have done nothing wrong and they should not be treated any differently from anyone else.

6. Even before HB56 was passed, Alabama will not issue a fishing license to my oldest son, John Doe #1 because he does not have the proper documents to qualify. If HB56 is implemented, I will be considered a criminal for harboring, encouraging and transporting my own sons to do basic activities a father would do with his sons. My wife and I are law abiding citizens and want to do things the right way and follow the law.

7. My oldest son attends public high school. He will be a junior in high school this fall and is an excellent student. Under HB56, the officials at his school will require proof of his immigration status, which I cannot provide. I am worried

about how my son's school officials' inquiries into his immigration status will affect him, his studies and his future. Because of this I am considering not enrolling him in public schools.

8. I am also concerned about what could happen if both boys were stopped and detained, even while riding their bikes, if I weren't there to protect them. I am also fearful that one or both of my sons could be subject to discrimination or retaliatory actions for the way they look or sound because of their Hispanic appearance and because English is not their first language.

9. I am furious that our state representatives have wasted and will continue to waste tax payer money with this law. I am a Republican and probably agree with many of our Republican legislators on most issues. On this one issue, on this law, however, I do not.

10. There is already so much red tape and bureaucracy in the immigration process and to add another level of bureaucracy by implementing state level laws that conflict with federal law is crazy to me.

11. I think this bill intentionally targets Hispanics. I have worked with Hispanic people for years and they are good, hardworking people. They come here to support their families and better themselves. I believe we need to reform our immigration laws, but I believe it should be done at the federal level, not state by state. This law is not going to make people leave; it is just going to push families

and hardworking people underground. I am furious that Alabama is spending money on this. I think this law creates two classes of people in Alabama—and that is not what this country is built on.

12. I have always been proud to call Alabama my home and I would like to instill the same sense of pride that I have in our state in my sons. I want to raise my sons in Alabama, my home, but HB 56 will criminalize me for doing this and will criminalize and make targets out of innocent children like my sons. They have done nothing wrong and do not deserve this.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

EXECUTED this 13 day of July, 2011 in Alabaster, Alabama.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Webster". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Matt Webster