



SOCIETY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

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SOPHE Boycotts Arizona: Relocates Conference in Opposition to Immigration and Ethnic Studies Bills

Washington, D.C. – Following the recent enactment of Arizona legislation on illegal immigration (SB 1070) and prohibiting ethnic studies in schools (HB 2281), the Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) will relocate its 2011 Midyear Meeting, previously scheduled for Phoenix, Arizona, to another state.

In this action, SOPHE joins with the cities of Austin, Boston, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and St. Paul, as well as the Asian American Justice Center, the Center for Community Change, the National Council of La Raza, the National Legal Aid & Defender Association, and the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights in refusing to hold any major events in the state until the law is repealed or declared unconstitutional. Six United Nations Human Rights experts also have spoken out against SB 1070, indicating that States are required to respect and ensure the human rights of all persons subject to their jurisdiction, without discrimination.

“Given that SOPHE’s mission is to promote the health of all people, regardless of race or ethnicity, we must oppose any action that could result in potential discrimination against Mexicans, indigenous peoples and other minorities in Arizona,” states SOPHE President Dr. Diane Allensworth. “Furthermore, we contest any law that prohibits school programs from featuring the histories and cultures of ethnic minorities. All children should have the right to learn about their own cultural and linguistic heritage.”

SOPHE’s Midyear Scientific Conference addresses the latest individual and community based approaches to disease prevention, health promotion, eliminating health disparities, and promoting social justice. The meeting typically attracts some 400 to 500 leading behavioral scientists and health education faculty, practitioners, and students for two and one-half days in May or June each year.

“It is not SOPHE’s intention to disproportionately affect the working people of Arizona,” says Dr. Daniel Perales, SOPHE President-Elect. “However, remaining silent on such human rights violations would breach SOPHE’s commitment to an Open Society and would be potentially even more damaging to Arizona’s residents and its most vulnerable citizens.”

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Founded in 1950, the Society for Public Health Education provides global leadership to the profession of health education and health promotion and promotes the health of society through advances in health education theory and research, excellence in professional preparation and practice, advocacy for public policies conducive to health, and the achievement of health equity for all. For more information, see www.sophe.org