



Alabama Sen. Bryan Taylor: Immigration law could be factor in driving down jobless rate

Published: Friday, November 25, 2011, 11:17 AM Updated: Friday, November 25, 2011, 12:13 PM

By Martin Swant --- The Birmingham News

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama -- While acknowledging it's impossible to immediately prove whether Alabama's strict new immigration law is driving down the state's unemployment rate, state Sen. **Bryan Taylor** says there are signs it's a real factor.

For one thing, the Prattville Republican who supports the bill said three of the five states that had the steepest unemployment rate drops in October have implemented new immigration laws. South Carolina, Utah and Alabama all have passed laws meant to curb illegal immigration, he said. The other two -- Minnesota and Michigan -- haven't taken as tough a stance.

Alabama, Minnesota and Michigan each had a half-percent decrease in their unemployment rates last month, leading the nation, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"It's hard to draw a causal relationship conclusively, but it's certainly plausible," Taylor said in an interview. "It's interesting that every time there's evidence to support the passage of the immigration laws, the opponents seem to shift their arguments to some other reason for being against the bill."

Taylor also said he thinks it's difficult to say the legislation is harming economic development and job creation, considering that major expansion projects have been announced lately. Both **Mercedes-Benz** and **Honda** have said they are expanding and hiring.

Taylor said critics of the bill keep trying to hit a moving target by shifting the things they don't like about the bill. First, he said, the reason was that Americans wouldn't take the jobs held by illegal immigrants. The next claim was that the legislation was hate-based, targeting Hispanics.

He said that was proven false by the **arrest** of a German executive of Mercedes-Benz in Tuscaloosa. Law enforcement officials announced Wednesday that **charges were dropped** against the executive.

A week ago, **Micky Hammon**, R-Decatur, one of the sponsors of the

Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, **touched off the question** over the unemployment drop when he said the immigration law was a factor.

A few days later, a sister organization of **Alabama Arise** said the numbers **pointed** more to the fact that many Alabamians have simply stopped looking for jobs.