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Inglis to embark on 4th District fact-finding tour

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WASHINGTON -- Rep. Bob Inglis, R-S.C., will begin a fact-finding tour of the Fourth District Monday to learn more about how immigration issues affect the area.

Inglis said in a statement that he wants to gather information on legal and illegal immigration to know how to better secure the state's borders.

"It's clear that we have a complex set of immigration laws that are very difficult to enforce," he said.

South Carolina has seen a 21.6 percent increase in its foreign-born population, according to Census Bureau estimates. The Immigration Naturalization Services estimated about 36,000 illegal immigrants lived in South Carolina in 2003.

One stop on the tour will be Arcadia Elementary School, where close to 50 percent of its student body is Hispanic, said Principal Chuck Bagwell.

Bagwell said he plans to show Inglis during the Oct. 24 visit how the school is run and how the school's English program is critical to its students.

Arcadia keeps its immigrant students immersed in the English language by hosting programs to keep the students in school throughout the year, he said.

An after school program, summer school programs and Boys and Girls clubs are available to all

students and are partially funded by federal monies.

Inglis also will do a ride-along with Spartanburg County Sheriff Chuck Wright after visiting Arcadia.

Sheriff spokesman Maj. Dan Johnson said Inglis expressed an interest in visiting high-crime areas in the county.

During the multi-stop tour, Inglis also will hold Walk Talk town meetings in Greenville on Oct. 10 and in Spartanburg on Oct. 13. He said he wants to find the right balance of welcoming immigrants to the state while also keeping up with current laws.

"We want to control our borders and we want to remain true to our heritage as a nation of immigrants," Inglis said.

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