City Drops Immigration Case Against Mercedes Exec

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. (AP) — Authorities said Wednesday they dropped a charge against a German Mercedes-Benz executive who was arrested under Alabama's new crackdown on illegal immigration after a police officer caught him driving without identification required by the law.

While Tuscaloosa police arrested the man last week for not having proper citizenship documents while driving a rental car in the city, city attorney Tim Nunnally said in an email the charge was dismissed after the man later provided the documents in municipal court.

Police identified the man as Detlev Hager, 46. The company said he was in Alabama on business at the time but declined further comment.

The arrest drew widespread attention because the German automaker is one of the state's leading employers, and its decision to build its first U.S. assembly plant in Alabama in 1993 provided the spark that helped lead to the state's large automotive industry, which includes foreign manufacturers Honda, Hyundai and Toyota.

Republicans who support the immigration law say it will help create jobs for legal Alabama residents by driving away illegal immigrants, but some business leaders and critics of the law contend similar arrests could hurt economic development in the state by making it a less-attractive location for foreign companies.

One newspaper cited the executive's arrest in urging Mercedes to move to Missouri from Alabama.

"Our state has many advantages over Alabama. We are the Show-Me State, not the 'Show me your papers' state,'" the St. Louis Post-Dispatch wrote in an editorial.

The man's arrest caused a state inquiry to the city prompted by Republican Gov. Robert Bentley, who signed the law, but his office refused to say how Bentley knew the man had been detained. Bentley is from Tuscaloosa, where he practiced medicine for years.

Source URL (retrieved on *04/01/2015 - 8:34pm*):
http://www.impomag.com/news/2011/11/city-drops-immigration-case-against-

mercedes-exec