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Fremont, Nebraska: The town that banned immigrants

Is the latest local crackdown on illegal immigration justified — and will it work?

By The Week Staff | June 23, 2010

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The voters of Fremont, Nebraska (pop. 25,000) [this week passed an ordinance](#) that would prevent illegal immigrants from renting property or getting a job in the community. The measure [requires](#) businesses to verify citizenship of all workers, and renters to obtain a license from the local police department. While supporters say the law is an appropriate response to lax federal enforcement, the Nebraska American Civil Liberties Union argues it is unconstitutional and plans to mount a legal challenge. Is Fremont's new law smart policy? ([Watch a local report about Fremont's new law](#))



The town of Fremont, Nebraska wants to ban immigrants from settling there. Creative Commons

Fremont is setting a dangerous precedent: This "outrageous" measure "ought to worry Americans everywhere," [says former GOP congressman Bob Barr in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution](#). Between this and "the Arizona law," an increasing number of Americans are showing a "deeply troublesome" willingness to "grant far-reaching — even arbitrary powers" to law enforcement. If this continues, "our country and our Constitution are in imminent danger."

["Latest anti-immigration laws reek of 'Big Brother-ism'"](#)

If you want something done right, do it yourself: Illegal immigration is a real and serious problem, [says The Daily Republic \(Mitchell, SD\) in an editorial](#). And since the "federal government" has proven itself incapable of "enforcing its own existing immigration laws," the residents of Fremont came up with "their own methods to curb a rise in foreigners living and working illegally in our country." What's wrong with that?

["Acts to curb illegal aliens aren't racism"](#)

The law is racist and abhorrent: The laws of sort passed by Fremont voters "effectively criminalise the entire Latino community," says [Queen Emily at Feministe](#). Sadly, the town seems intent on "purging" itself of undocumented immigrants. Let's hope the legal challenges are successful, "because the spread of these laws *must* be stopped."

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This "money saving" bill will have the opposite effect: Backers of this law have been arguing "that illegal immigration is costing local taxpayers a lot of money," says [Andrea Nill at Think Progress](#). But odds are good that passing a law of "questionable legality" will end up costing them "a lot more." Prolonged court battles, after all, aren't cheap. "Unfortunately, the only winners" in this situation will be the lawyers.

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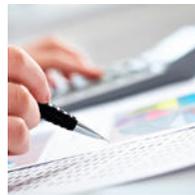
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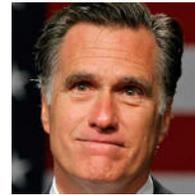
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