

Court Backs Law on Immigrants

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By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX, Dec. 8 (AP) — A federal judge has thrown out a lawsuit that challenged a new Arizona law barring businesses from knowingly hiring illegal immigrants, setting the stage for the law to take effect in January.

In a ruling released Friday night, the judge, Neil V. Wake of Federal District Court, said the business and immigrant rights groups that filed the challenge sued the wrong government officials in trying to block enforcement of the law.

The ruling said the law gave only investigatory authority to the governor and state attorney general, who were sued in the challenge.

Judge Wake said the power to enforce the law rested with county prosecutors, who were not named as defendants.

The judge also said the business and immigrant rights groups had not shown that they faced imminent crackdowns.

Opponents of the law argued that it would burden employers, and that the state lacked the legal authority to regulate immigration. Supporters said it was needed because the federal government had not adequately enforced a prohibition on knowingly hiring illegal immigrants.