

Nebraska City Votes to Keep Rule Aimed at Illegal Immigrants

By EMMA G. FITZSIMMONS FEB. 12, 2014

Residents of a small city in Nebraska voted on Tuesday to keep a controversial measure [they approved in 2010](#) to ban illegal immigrants from renting homes.

Almost 60 percent of voters supported upholding the ordinance in a special election in Fremont, Neb.

About 3,800 residents voted to keep the housing measure, while 2,600 voted to drop it, according to unofficial election results from the Dodge County Election Commissioner.

The meatpacking town of about 25,000 people became a central front in the debate over immigration when it approved the ordinance almost four years ago. The measure prohibits landlords from renting to illegal immigrants and requires renters to apply for a permit from the police and to declare that they are in the country legally.

Support for the measure was slightly stronger now than in the previous vote on the issue. In 2010, about 57 percent of voters approved the referendum.

On Tuesday night, the Nebraska chapter of the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) criticized the results and said that the group would be watching for discrimination as the ordinance was enforced.

“We are saddened by the result of today’s vote, and will stand with those residents of Fremont who will be harmed by the unfortunate decision to allow a discriminatory housing ordinance to be implemented,” the group said in a statement.

The city’s mayor, Scott Getzschman, and the local Chamber of Commerce supported amending the law to remove the housing provision because they said it was bringing negative attention to the city, which is about 30 miles northwest of Omaha. City officials have said that at least one business decided not to move to the community because of the ordinance.

But those supporting the housing provision say that having more illegal immigrants in the city has caused the costs of education, hospitals and law enforcement to rise. They have expressed anger with local officials for trying to reverse the decision by voters.

The ordinance also had a provision requiring Fremont businesses to use a federal database, E-Verify, to check new employees’ information. That part is already being enforced.

But the housing measure has been stuck in limbo for years because of legal challenges. After the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit upheld most of the ordinance last year, local officials decided to schedule another vote.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/12/us/nebraska-city-votes-to-keep-rule-aimed-at-illegal-immigrants.html>