

Another Town Gets Tough on Illegals

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Another American town has decided to take matters into its own hands to help stop the invasion of illegal aliens into the U.S.

This time it's [Bridgeport, Pa.](#), whose council has unanimously banned illegals from working or renting residences in the area.

The Illegal Immigration Relief Act came under fire from the Accion Communal Latino Americana de Montgomery County, which asked the council to reconsider the measure it calls divisive.

"It is obvious to me the ordinance could be used to foment an atmosphere of profiling," its executive director, Eddie Cruz said.

He told the Times Herald of Norristown, Pa., that his group may file a legal challenge against the ordinance.

As [WND reported in August](#), small cities frustrated by the federal government's immigration policy are passing laws that make it harder for illegals to live and work in their communities.

Dozens of towns have followed the path of Hazelton, Pa., which passed an ordinance July 13 to deter housing owners from renting to illegals. Riverside, N.J., quickly passed a similar measure, which fines landlords \$1,000 per day for renting to illegals and removes business licenses from employers who hire illegals.

Already, legal action has been taken by opponents who insist the new laws usurp federal authority.

The Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, which is challenging Hazelton in court, says four communities have passed similar measures and another 17 are considering them, according to Stateline.org.

On the state level, legislatures have considered a record 550 pieces of immigration-related legislation and passed at least 77 new laws in 27 states, Stateline.org said, citing the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In Georgia, a massive immigration reform package passed in May sanctioned employers who hire illegals and anyone who offers them access to public services. Colorado's legislature later passed similar measures.

In Pennsylvania, Hazelton Mayor Louis J. Barletta, an immigrant's grandson, says he wants to make his town "the toughest place on illegal immigrants in America."

"What I'm doing here is protecting the legal taxpayer of any race," he told the Washington Post. "And I will get rid of the illegal people. It's this simple: They must leave."

While the law doesn't take effect for another month, the Republican mayor already sees progress, according to the Post.

"I see illegal immigrants picking up and leaving -- some Mexican restaurants say business is off 75 percent," Barletta said. "The message is out there."

Elsewhere:

- In Valley Park, Mo., earlier this month, landlords began evicting residents who don't have legal status in the country.

Landis, N.C., unanimously passed an ordinance that requires residents to conduct business with the town in English only, the local Kannapolis Independent Tribune reported. Alderman James Furr said the reason for the ordinance is to get everyone on the same page.

"We want to welcome immigrants to Landis and want to understand them," Furr said. "When someone comes before the board, I want to know them."

- A nearby town, Mint Hill, N.C., is considering an ordinance that would go a step further, making English the official language but also punishing business owners that hire illegal workers or provide them services. Business owners would face loss of licenses for up to five years on the first offense, the Kannapolis Independent Tribune said.

In Escondido, Calif., city leaders voted 3-2 last week to draft an ordinance to punish people who provide jobs and housing to illegal immigrants.

Councilman Ed Gallo said the council's charge is to "provide for the health and safety of the residents of Escondido. Is it wrong then to ask them to be here legally?"

Hispanics make up 42 percent of the town's 142,000 people.

- In Farmers Branch, Texas, a city councilman plans to propose similar measures and also wants to stop publication of any documents in Spanish and eliminate subsidies for illegal immigrants in the city's youth programs, according to KWTX-TV in Waco, Texas.
- In Riverside, N.J., the city council already has adjusted to court challenges, approving several amendments to reinforce an ordinance that bans hiring or housing illegal immigrants, the Philadelphia Inquirer reported.
- In Arcadia, Wisc., the new mayor, John Kimmel, is being accused of racism for plans to make English the official language and to create an "illegal alien task force" that would forward complaints to federal authorities and hold landlords accountable for renting to illegal immigrants, reported the Associated Press.
- The city council of Altoona, Pa., introduced an ordinance calling for fines and revocation of licenses for employers who hire illegal aliens and landlords who house them.

Officials there, however, will not include making English the official language because they fear it would not be legally defensible, the Altoona Mirror newspaper reported.

Councilman Ron Reidell said the ordinance is justifiable because illegal aliens "breaking the law sap our resources, and they show themselves unwilling to go through channels others have navigated at great expense and effort."

Meanwhile, some employers themselves are cracking down on the hiring of illegals.

Companies in California are using the state's unfair competition statutes to sue competitors, claiming their rivals gain an unfair advantage by hiring illegals at lower wages, without pensions or workers compensation.

Groups that oppose illegal immigration are helping finance the legal actions, the Associated Press reported, believing the tactic could prompt a wave of litigation across the country that would deter hiring of illegals.

Statistics compiled by the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement show immigration law enforcement at work sites is limited. Last year, just 1,145 work site arrests were recorded, compared to 2,849 in fiscal 1999.

Federal borders agents in at least one sector also are taking initiative, cooperating with local governments to make a 210-mile stretch along the Texas-Mexico border a "zero-tolerance zone" for illegals.

Rather than being immediately sent home, illegals caught in this area – surrounding Del Rio, Texas – are arrested, prosecuted and sometimes sentenced to prison before being formally deported, the AP reported.

Federal officials, in fact, have praised the effort as a creative combination of local and federal resources to curb illegal entry.

Other border sectors have not engaged in such a practice because of limited resources. In the Del Rio sector, however, authorities have found bed space elsewhere in the region and assigned federal agents to help prosecute cases, the AP said.

"There's nothing we're doing that wasn't already on the books," said Hilario Leal Jr., a supervisory Border Patrol agent in the Del Rio sector. "It's nothing new. We just started enforcing the law."