

PRESS RELEASE
06/21/2010

For Immediate Release

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Enormous Local Effort Fails to Prevent Outside Anti-Immigrant Proposal

Nebraskans will be left to pay the price of FAIR's legal experiment

Fremont, Nebraska, is unfortunately the next in a small handful of towns nationwide that will now face the high cost of a city ordinance that attempts to conduct local immigration enforcement.

What we find inspiring, however, are the hundreds of Fremont residents and community institutions who worked tirelessly over the past weeks to provide good, factual information to their neighbors in an effort to defeat the ordinance. Community members of all backgrounds came together to promote a different vision for the future of Fremont and Nebraska. They are the real story of the future of Fremont and the promise of our state. At many points in our nation's history, it has been efforts like these that have shown us at our best and eventually pointed history in the direction we are proud to say lives up to our values.

More than 200 residents - including new immigrants and longtime community members, union workers, local businesses, and others - walked door-to-door to reach 9,000 homes over the weekend. The Fremont Ministerial Association, Fremont Chamber of Commerce, One Fremont One Future, Centsible Citizens Say No, and many other community institutions, associations, and individuals held press conferences, meetings, and wrote letters to the paper to share information about their opposition to the ordinance.

In the complex and politically charged issue of immigration, it takes time to counter fear and misinformation and to share the facts. Increasing numbers of Nebraskans had become skeptical of the proposal, which has been peddled by a national organization in small towns around the country. Washington, D.C.-based FAIR has sought to test its legal theories on several towns, promoting the same language in Hazleton, Pennsylvania, Farmers Branch, Texas, and other municipalities, without regard for the costly outcomes and community divisions it leaves behind for local residents.

What should instead be our focus is the potential of our communities when we work together, celebrating the contributions of new and longtime residents, and continuing to build our future together. And, most importantly the need for workable solutions to our immigration system at the federal level that uphold our values and move us forward together.

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Nebraska Appleseed, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest law project, is a national leader in addressing social problems facing vulnerable children without loving and permanent homes, low-income families working hard to make ends meet, and new immigrants seeking a better life. Nebraska Appleseed's current year action plan and description of its six program areas, significant litigation and policy reform successes, and broad-based accomplishments can be found at neappleseed.org.

Nebraska Appleseed is a part of the Appleseed network of independent state-based public interest law centers working to identify and address social injustices. The Appleseed network seeks to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise by addressing root causes and producing practical, systemic solutions with broad implication. For more information visit appleseednetwork.org.

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