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Please find below an important decision on immigration recently made by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Appeals court upholds Arizona immigration law

By JACQUES BILLEAUD

PHOENIX (AP) — A federal appeals court on Wednesday upheld an Arizona law that penalizes businesses that knowingly hire illegal immigrants and requires them to verify the employment status of their workers.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision rejected a challenge by business and civil-rights groups that contend the law infringes on federal immigration powers.

The law, intended to lessen the economic incentive for immigrants to sneak into the country, imposes civil penalties on employers by suspending or revoking their business licenses when they are found to have knowingly hired illegal immigrants.

While it upheld the law, a three-judge panel of the court left the door open for other challenges, saying no one has been accused of violating the law since it took effect nine months ago.

Republican state Rep. Russell Pearce of Mesa, the author of the law, said the ruling is a big win for the movement to get state and local governments to crack down on illegal immigration.

"Locals are just as responsible for the crisis in America in this invasion (of illegal immigrants) as the federal government," Pearce said.

The civil-rights groups that challenged the law are considering whether to appeal the ruling to the 9th Circuit or the U.S. Supreme Court.

Jonathan Weissglass, an attorney for the groups, said the law and the ruling could create problems for employers who have operations in more than one state because states could have different sets of hiring rules.

"What the 9th Circuit has allowed is everyone can enact its own laws regarding immigrant employment, which would create chaos," Weissglass said.

It's unclear whether the business groups that challenged the law will seek an appeal. Two lawyers representing the groups were unavailable for comment Wednesday because they were out of the country.

Lawyers for the state argued that while a similar federal hiring law prevents states from imposing civil or criminal penalties against businesses for illegal hirings, the federal law lets states take licensing actions against violators. The appellate court agreed with that argument.

A lower-court judge upheld the law in February.