

Both sides play mixed ruling to their advantage

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Body

Immediately after the Supreme Court rejected parts of Arizona's controversial immigration law, Democrats claimed vindication. President Obama was right, they said, to challenge the law.

Republicans offered a more nuanced position: that the case was a result of Obama's failure to produce the comprehensive solution to immigration that he had promised.

Obama issued a statement declaring himself "pleased that the Supreme Court has struck down key provisions of Arizona's immigration law."

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., declared the **ruling** proof that the law "was not just ill-advised but also unconstitutional."

GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney told supporters at a fundraiser in Arizona, "The states, now under this decision, have less authority, less latitude, to enforce immigration law," the Associated Press reported. In a statement he said, "President Obama has failed to provide any leadership on immigration."

The **ruling** marked the second time in 10 days that Romney had been forced off his message -- the weak economy is Obama's fault -- to address the immigration issue. He has yet to say whether he would repeal the president's June 15 decision not to deport some young illegal immigrants.

Charles Foster, an immigration policy adviser to **both** President George W. Bush's 2004 campaign and Obama's 2008 campaign, said the decision was a clear win for the Obama administration.

"It's human nature to try to have some face-saving, but there's very little (Republicans) got out of this decision today. I think it is a huge, huge victory that you cannot understate for the Obama administration," Foster said. "The Obama administration, after all, was accused of having acted callously by not standing up for the states and by challenging the law."

The court threw out several provisions of the Arizona law but allowed to stand a controversial section requiring state and local police to check the immigration status of people stopped or detained if there is "reasonable suspicion" that they are in the country illegally.

Former New Mexico governor Bill Richardson, a Democrat, said the political message of the case is that Obama "stood behind Hispanics throughout this whole legal battle." "The immigration decision will energize the Hispanic base which needs energizing," he said.

A USA TODAY/Gallup Poll released Monday showed Obama had a comfortable lead among Hispanic voters. But some Republicans said the impact of the immigration headlines will wane over the campaign's remaining months.

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Danny Diaz, former deputy communication director for Sen. John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, said that "Hispanics are by and large pocketbook voters. As the case against the president's failed economic policies is litigated to much greater degree in the general election, the current gap will narrow among Latino voters."

Jennifer Sevilla-Korn, executive director of the right-of-center Hispanic Leadership Network and former Bush staffer, said it was too soon to tell who will benefit politically from this decision.

"It seems like there is a little bit for everybody to love and hate in this ruling," she said.

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