

BACKGROUND: In 1964 the majority of voters in California voted in favor of Proposition 14. This legislation reversed the Rumford Fair Housing Act, which protected Californians from housing discrimination based on their “race, color, religion, national origin, or ancestry.” Despite being passed into law by a large majority of citizens, many people believed Proposition 14 promoted bigotry and racial oppression. The law was contested, and when a case was brought to the California Supreme Court arguing that Proposition 14 was unconstitutional, the state court agreed to remove it. This decision had an important legacy for housing.



The California Real Estate Association will take the decision by the California Supreme Court that Proposition 14 is unconstitutional to the United States Supreme Court, it was announced today by Burt Smith of Bellflower, CREA president. He told a Los Angeles news conference that the association’s executive committee made the decision during a meeting June 12, and instructed its attorney’s to petition the federal court for a writ of certiorari in two of the seven cases involved in the state court’s May 10 decision. . . .

[SOURCE] This is the text from an article titled “To Appeal Proposition 14 / Ruling To U.S. Supreme Court,” published in *La Habra Star*, no. 143, on June 22, 1966.

1. What is a heading you would give to this section of the text?

Your heading should use five words or fewer.

2. Highlight or circle the exact words or phrases that work as evidence to support your choice of a heading for that section.
3. Write a sentence to explain why the evidence you highlighted shows the consequences of the California Supreme Court decision to rule against Proposition 14.

Smith said that the board of directors of the 55,000-member association earlier authorized such action as part of its approval to defend Proposition 14 in the courts. “Someone must fight to uphold the expressed will of the four and one half million voters of this state who approved Proposition 14,” he said, “so we’re doing it. We are certain the California Supreme Court was dead wrong in its ruling against the voters. We are confident the U.S. Supreme Court will reverse the decision.”

Smith said he based that confidence on previous decisions of the federal court. “It’s important to recognize,” he commented, “that the California court’s decision went into an area of interpretation of the law far beyond that of any other court when it held that the people cannot prevail without becoming involved in ‘state action’ as defined in that amendment. “We also strongly protest,” he added, “the court’s refusal to recognize that the people’s vote clearly repealed parts of the Rumford Act.”

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6. Write a sentence to explain why the evidence you highlighted shows why Smith and the CREA were opposed to the California Supreme Court’s ruling.

Proposition 14 was adopted in 1964 by a vote of 4,526,469 to 12,395,747. It restored the right of the owner of residential property to rent or sell his property to anyone as he saw fit. The State Supreme Court held that in exercising such freedom of choice, the owner might racially discriminate and thereby violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment to the Federal Constitution. In overturning the people’s vote on Proposition 14, the court reinstated provisions of the Rumford and Unruh Acts which forbid racial and religious discrimination by some owners of residential property. . . .

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9. Write a sentence to explain why the evidence you highlighted shows the California Supreme Court’s reasoning for overturning Proposition 14.

Focus Question:

What were the consequences of the California Supreme Court ruling against Proposition 14?

Headings	Highlights (evidence)	How does this evidence help to answer the focus question?