

Plyler v. Doe: Securing the Constitutional Right to Education for Undocumented
Children

Adrianna Balderas and Sara Lay
Junior Group Website
Student Composed Words: 1200
Multimedia length: 0:38
Process Paper Word Count: 497

Beginning NHD this year, we knew we wanted a topic with a legal impact. So, we focused our research on court cases, especially pertaining to the right to education. In doing so, we discovered the landmark case, *Plyler v. Doe*. This case stood out to us as it secured the right to education for undocumented children, an issue that is still very relevant in the current political climate. *Plyler v. Doe* relates to this year's theme, "Rights and Responsibilities," in its establishment of undocumented students' constitutional right to education and the government's responsibility to ensure this right is granted.

We began our research by looking into the facts of the case. We found the case docket, oral records of the trial in the Supreme Court, key players in both propelling the lawsuit and during litigation, and the premises for the lawsuit. After understanding the case itself, we read amicus curiae briefs and other analysis of *Plyler's* place in history. Once we were able to understand the case's historical context, we researched its statistical impact in the millions of children the case has effected. Next, we researched the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, which enabled many undocumented children to pursue higher education and job opportunities. In learning about DACA, we explored *Plyler's* continuous obstruction of efforts to divest undocumented children's right to education, as well as threats the ruling currently faces.

We used a website to feature the plethora of photos, quotes, and multimedia of *Plyler v. Doe*. To create our project, we used NHD WebCentral. Multimedia was recorded and edited on QuickTime. From here, we organized our pages in terms of before, during, and after. This resulted in our background and case initiation pages, the suit in each level of federal court, and finally, the *Plyler* legacy.

Throughout our website, we argue that *Plyler v. Doe* secured the right to education for undocumented children. The case proved the unconstitutionality of Texas Education Code Section 21.031 and legally established that state and local governments have the responsibility to provide all children equal access to a public education, regardless of their immigration status.

Immediately following the ruling of *Plyler v. Doe*, all formally expelled undocumented students were readmitted into public school. Over the past forty years since the ruling, millions of undocumented children have had access to a free and accessible education. This case was significant as it had a landmark ruling that broke barriers in the fight for undocumented peoples' rights. *Plyler* protects their children from permanently becoming an underclass due to their deprivation of an education and continues to shape the individual futures and lives of undocumented people. Moreover, the ruling continues to influence current immigration politics, counteracting bills aiming to revoke undocumented children's right to education and exclude them from public school. In this consequent reexamination of what education means to a child's life, *Plyler v. Doe* has irrevocably reaffirmed its vitality in ensuring that a child is able to succeed and grow.