

Immigration



Immigration is a complex issue that affects legal, economic, security, and cultural interests. Many people view it as a political football because of a sharp divide among the populous. Year after year, it is because of our Democratic principles that thousands of people seek entry into the United States. We are a nation of immigrants that welcomes millions of people. The conundrum is the ability to reach consensus on government policy that would lead to reform of this nation's immigration system.

Between 1840 and 1860, four million Europeans arrived in the United States, most from Germany, Ireland, and Scandinavia. They were pushed from their homelands due to political, agricultural, and industrial upheaval. They were drawn by demands for labor, the promise of land, and democratic ideals. Many citizens objected mainly because they sensed Chinese labors would squeeze them out of their jobs.

James Plyler, Superintendent of the Tyler Independent School District in Texas claimed that limited resources posed burdens on limited resources. In May 1975, the Texas Legislature revised its education laws to withhold from local school districts any state funds for the education of children who were not "legally admitted" into the United States. However, justice prevailed when the Supreme Court held that the Legislature's laws violated the Fourteenth Amendment.

Summary of the Opinion Plyler v. Doe 457 U.S. 202 (1982)

- The Texas statute imposes a lifetime hardship on a discrete class of children not accountable for their disabling statute.
- ...but the children who are plaintiffs in these cases "can affect neither their parents' conduct nor their own status."
- This situation raises the specter of a permanent caste of undocumented residents, encouraged by some to remain here as a source of cheap labor.
- The Equal Protection Clause was intended as a restriction on state legislative action inconsistent with elemental constitutional premises.
- The Texas statute violates the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.