

# A debate pertaining to illegal immigrant children in public schools

[Family](#), [Children](#)



Roxie Vasquez ENG 102-2270 03/25/06 Research Paper A Debate Pertaining to Illegal Immigrant Children in Public Schools “ The terms “ illegal immigrant” and “ illegal alien” are commonly used phrases that refer to the illegality of the action of migration without legal authorization” (wikipedia). Whether or not illegal immigrant children should be educated at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels in the U. S. , is a fiercely debated topic these days. Many debates are taking place all over the U. S. pertaining to whether or not illegal immigrant children are entitled to a free public education. One major debate taking place here in Arizona is that Governor Napolitano and “ its controlled Legislature are locked in a stalemate over the teaching of the English language and how much to pay for it” (nytimes). Furthermore, illegal immigrant children should be given the chance to be educated in the U. S. and should not be banned from public schools because of their parent’s actions. Illegal immigration is a crime and sneaking into the country is in violation of the immigration law.

For many illegal immigrant children, it is a tragedy to be raised here in the U. S. as an American child, to later learn that all their life-long goals and dreams they worked so hard for, aren’t realistic because of their illegal status. The illegal status of these children becomes very deceiving to them because as a young child they have no idea that they are illegal immigrants. It is even more devastating for that child (when the possibility arrives) that later in life that child might have to return to that “ unknown foreign country” they were born in.

Also, the American people who live in areas consumed by large amounts of immigrants are concerned about their school budget and the quality of education their child receives. To begin, one opposing argument against illegal immigrant children attending public schools is that it is widely believed that America cannot financially afford to educate the world's children. Immigrant children attending public schools accounts for the dramatic increases in school enrollment, and failure to consider the capacity may have very real consequences for future public education in the U. S...

Programs created specifically to serve students whose second language is English accounts for much of the extra costs and it is reported from Census that immigrant children accounts for such a large percentage of the school-age population. " An estimated 400, 000 illegal immigrant children enter the U. S. each year and educating those children costs several states more than four billion dollars annually" (ap/online). Here in the state of Arizona, Governor Napolitano has " proposed spending \$45 million a year to expand the English-language instruction in Arizona's public schools" (nytimes).

Secondly, a disagreement pertaining to illegal immigrant children attending public schools is that public schools in the U. S. are open to all children, in spite of their status and by law; it is mandatory that all children attend school. Also, the law states that each and every child, despite their legal status, is required to attend school from the age of six years to 16 years of age. The only necessary information to give in order to attend a public school is proof of residency in that district the child wishes to attend, a birth certificate, and vaccination records.

In addition to laws, “ Proposition 200 requires Arizonan’s to provide proof of citizenship when registering to vote and apply for public benefits” (azcentral). Because of this law, a numerous amount of Americans are appalled that an illegal immigrant child can attend free public schools without showing any proof of citizenship. In 1982, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled five to four, that undocumented immigrant children are entitled to a free public education. Also, it is common knowledge that “ the action of INS has no effect on rules governing school enrollment” (heraldnews).

In addition, each year, thousands of women flee from their country to enter the U. S. and give birth, knowing very much that their child will automatically have U. S. citizenship. Because of this, illegal immigrant children are not to blame for their status. It is not the child’s fault that their parent brings them illegally into this country because a child has no knowledge of illegal immigration or of immigration laws. Too, most children believed to be illegal immigrants are actually U. S. -born American citizens, born to an illegal parent.

It is a fact that “ 22 percent of all American children under the age of six have immigrant parents” (ap/online). Also, all children, regardless of their legal status have “ full rights to a free public education” (weeklyreadercorp. ). Besides, all illegal immigrant children deserve a chance to change their situations and paths in life because “ illegal immigrant children are a future part of society and are worth the same investment as an American born child” (softcom. net). Almost all of the

several million illegal children that are here will be life long Americans and are likely to be productive adults if they receive support now.

As these illegal immigrant children are raised as an American born child, they will grow up knowing nothing else but the American born child's way of life. Plus, some of the money spent on educating immigrants, both legal and illegal, will pay off in future tax revenues as they will earn higher wages.

" At this point, Americans are under the false assumption that illegal immigrant children are a distant and separate population that exist apart from the rest of American society" (losangelestimes) and they are wrong: immigrant children in public schools total close to half the percentage of citizen children.

Besides, it is reported that one in every five student has an immigrant parent. Moreover, " under Title 8 Section 1325 of the U. S. Code, " Improper Entry by Alien," any citizen of any country other than the U. S. who: enters or attempts to enter the U. S. at any time or place other than as designated by immigration officers; or eludes examination or inspection by immigration officers; or attempts to enter or obtain entry to the U. S. by willfully false or misleading representation or the willful concealment of a material fact; has committed a crime" (wikipedia).

Hundreds of thousands of law-breaking illegal immigrants marched in America's streets demanding that their right to live, work, and attend free public schools in the U. S. illegally, be respected. Even though America is a nation built upon immigrants, an illegal immigrant should not get a free ride towards citizenship just because they have lived and worked and had

children here for years. The U. S. Congress is preparing to reward those who have broken our laws with the most precious treasure, the opportunity to become U.

S. citizens. Thus, some lawmakers have pushed for the prevention of illegal immigrant children being educated even at the youngest grade levels. As it stands now, an illegal immigrant child does not qualify for tuition benefits, but some states have passed laws allowing illegal children residency tuition benefits. Plus, the thousands of children from families of illegals who crowd school classrooms, challenges the claim that illegal workers contribute more than they consume.

It reportedly costs the state of Arizona “\$750 million to educate the children of illegal immigrants” (azcentral). What’s more, the “ Federation for American Immigration Reform estimates that illegal immigrants cost each Arizonan almost \$700” (ap/online) a year; a hidden tax that subsidizes illegal aliens and the employees who hire them. Furthermore, if illegal immigrant children are denied the right to a free education, they could end up being illiterate criminals who tap into social services and prison systems.

The cost of incarcerating illegal immigrants in Arizona’s prisons and jails amounts to about “ 80 million dollars a year; not including the cost of the crime that led to their incarceration. It is far better to have these children in school rather than to have them roaming crime-ridden neighborhoods day and night” (findarticles. com). Over the past several weeks, the debate over immigration overhaul has reached a boiling point, with hundreds of thousands taking to the streets to protest tighter controls on border security.

As an effect of the debate to whether or not illegal immigrants have a right to attend public schools, a majority of the illegal immigrant students have recently walked out of school to protest immigration laws. Many illegal students said they were “ marching in opposition to a bill sponsored by Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis. ), that passed the House in Dec. ; the bill would give police more power to enforce immigration laws” (chicagotribune). Although it is not an issue for legislature yet, many illegal immigrant students cannot register for college because they do not have a social security number.

In all, if the world wasn't fighting over free public education for everyone, then the world's children would continue attending class and would be safe in school and off the streets. In conclusion, some Republicans have portrayed illegal immigrants as “ invaders, criminals, and as burdens to society” (nytimes). Each year the Border Patrol arrest more than a million illegal aliens who flagrantly violate our nation's laws by unlawfully crossing U. S. borders, often with the aide and help of fraudulent documents.

All in all, illegal immigrants do not contribute more than they cost because the millions in prison and on welfare aren't contributing a dime to our economy and the ones who are working are often paid in cash without tax deductions. America has a way of bringing us in, welcoming us and allowing us to become a part of the whole. What's more, illegal immigrants migrate for a better future, education and rights. Thus, the U. S. has taken on many races, religions, and nationalities and has made them one nation; America has always been a nation built upon immigrants.