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Southern Poverty Law Center  
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UnidosUS

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March 26, 2026

The Honorable Chip Roy, Chairman  
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mary Gay Scanlon, Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on the Constitution and Limited Government  
Committee on the Judiciary  
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chairman Roy and Ranking Member Scanlon:

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the 41 additional undersigned organizations write to share our views regarding your recent hearing on the effects of the Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe* (1982). Our organizations strongly believe that *Plyler* was correctly decided as a matter of constitutional law, and that it has been profoundly beneficial to our country as a matter of public policy. We strongly oppose any effort to overturn or undermine this landmark ruling.

In *Plyler v. Doe*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, children cannot be denied access to a free public education on the basis of their immigration status. While the Court was split 5-4 on the constitutionality of the Texas law at issue in *Plyer*, it is important to note that the Court was unanimous in recognizing that the Texas law was senseless as a matter of public policy.

It was irrational, as the majority reasoned, for a state to penalize children for the conduct of their parents, or to create a subclass of children who would never be as productive in the future as they could be with a proper education. Decades later, former President Obama incorporated this same reasoning into the 2012 creation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. Together, *Plyler* and DACA have ensured that millions of children, all of whom had no say in their lack of legal immigration status, could grow up to contribute to our country and our economy.

Since *Plyler* was decided, the cost of educating undocumented children has been overwhelmingly offset by the benefits. A [report by FWD.us](https://www.fwd.us/report) found that the increased access to education under *Plyler* has generated \$633 billion more in state and local tax revenues than it cost to educate undocumented children. Our nation's gross domestic product (GDP) has been increased by nearly \$3 trillion. Health care costs have been reduced, and nearly a

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quarter of a million U.S. citizen children have been kept from falling into poverty. In contrast, the Trump administration's militarized crackdown on immigrants has hurt the [GDP](#) and [weakened America's labor market](#).

If *Plyler* were to be overturned or undermined, it could result in hundreds of thousands of children – none of whom can be blamed for their lack of immigration status – being shut out of education at the most important time for children to be in school. It would raise significant public safety concerns, exacerbate economic strains, cause workforce disruptions, and further increase the cost of health care.

Particularly in light of the long-term economic benefits of *Plyler*, the cost of educating undocumented students is ultimately not what is keeping localities, states, and the federal government from providing quality education. Rather, it is the overall, chronic failure to make adequate investments in public education. Congress should be focused on protecting educational equity and increasing those overall investments in schools, not trying to cut innocent children out of them.

Thank you for your consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Advancement Project  
AFT  
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees  
America's Voice  
Arab American Institute (AAI)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice- AAJC  
Center for Responsible Lending  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Common Cause  
Dēmos  
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund (DREDF)  
EdTrust  
Hispanic Federation  
Impact Fund  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Juvenile Law Center  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
MI Familia Vota  
NALEO Educational Fund

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National Association of Social Workers  
National Coalition for the Homeless  
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans  
National Council of Jewish Women  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)  
National Education Association  
National Homelessness Law Center  
National Women's Law Center  
People For the American Way  
PolicyLink  
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)  
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)  
Southern Poverty Law Center  
The Campaign for College Opportunity  
The Sikh Coalition  
UndocuBlack Network  
UnidosUS  
United Church of Christ  
Voto Latino