

Case 9: Immigrants Prohibited from Public Universities

Missouri's legislature is considering a bill that would prohibit illegal immigrants from enrolling in the state's colleges and universities. The bill's sponsor, State Representative Jerry Nolte argues, "We're accountable to the people of this state to spend their tax dollars primarily to educate Missouri students and those lawfully present." He further notes that it is illegal under federal law to allow illegal immigrants to enroll in their colleges and universities. He concludes, "While we are obligated to educate children K-12 regardless of legal status, there is no requirement to provide post-secondary education." Legislators arguing against the bill say that children of immigrants should not be punished for their parents' actions, legal or not.¹

States other than Missouri have made accommodations for educating illegal immigrants. According to New York Times Columnist, Joseph Berger, "Since 2001, California, Texas, Illinois, New York, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Utah, Washington, Kansas and Nebraska have charged illegal immigrants the same in-state tuition as other residents so long as they have graduated from state schools. But three states — Colorado, Georgia and Arizona — have explicitly outlawed such benefits."²

¹ Denney, Andrew, "Missouri immigration bill could require citizenship checks to enroll in college," *The Journal*, April 3, 2008. <http://media.www.webujournal.com/media/storage/paper245/news/2008/04/03/News/Missouri.Immigration.Bill.Could.Require.Citizenship.Checks.To.Enroll.In.College-3298026.shtml>

² Berger, Joseph, "Debates Persist Over Subsidies for Immigrant College Students," *The New York Times*, Dec. 12, 2007. <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/12/nyregion/12education.html>.