

## **Courts block immigration law in Calif.**

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### **Body**

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Proposition 187 was put on legal hold Wednesday, one day after voters overwhelmingly approved the law denying most state services to illegal immigrants.

Ruling on separate lawsuits filed Wednesday, a state judge and a federal judge said illegal immigrants cannot be denied services and their kids cannot be expelled from schools.

"It sends a loud clear message to any parts of the country tempted to pass an unconstitutional, discriminatory law like this that it's not going to be allowed to take effect," says Lucas Guttentag of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Hearings are scheduled for next week and later this month on whether to extend restraining orders or block enforcement of 187 until courts rule on its legality, perhaps in years.

The state vows to take the fight to the Supreme Court. Backers want to force a review of a 1982 high court ruling that illegal immigrant children cannot be denied public education.

Supporter Ron Prince says illegal immigrants "are a category of criminal, not a category of ethnic group."

Gov. Pete Wilson, a proponent, wrote President Clinton Wednesday, arguing California should not lose federal funds because of 187, calling it "the people's will" and "an issue not of race but of fairness."

Wilson had cautioned health and social service providers to wait for guidelines to be drawn up before turning people away.

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