

## **Judge throws out deportation case against 4 students**

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**Byline:** BY JACQUES BILLEAUD The Associated Press

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### **Body**

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A **judge** on Thursday **threw out** the **deportation case against** four young people who were taking part in a high school science competition near the Canadian border when the government found **out** that the **students** were brought to the U.S. illegally as toddlers.

U.S. Immigration **Judge** John Richardson granted a request from the four to exclude key evidence in the **case**, ruling that agents questioned the **students** based on their Hispanic appearance.

Tim Counts, a spokesman for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said no decision has been made yet on whether to appeal.

Jaime Damian, 20; Yuliana Huicochea, 20; Oscar Corona, 20; and Luis Nava, 21, were on a school trip in June 2002 to compete in a solar-powered boat competition near Buffalo, N.Y., when they drew the attention of immigration officials.

The **students** wanted to make a side trip to Niagara Falls in Canada. Federal agents looked into their immigration status after a teacher asked whether the **students** would be allowed to return to the United States with only their **student** IDs.

All have finished high school, and three of them are either enrolled or have completed college.

During their attempt to cross the border, the **students** said they faced aggressive questioning about their identification, country of birth and when they were brought into the country. Three of the **students** testified that border officials made racially offensive comments in their presence.

An estimated 65,000 illegal immigrants who have lived in the United States for at least five years graduate from high school each year, according to the Urban Institute, an economic and social policy research group.

Advocates for immigrants say it is rare for **students** who aren't legal citizens to undergo **deportation** proceedings after spending most of their lives here. They say Congress should approve a proposal to give children of illegal immigrants the chance to become U.S. citizens.

### **Graphic**

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## PHOTO

PHOTO BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS - Luis Nava, 21, (right), and Oscar Corona, 20, leave U.S. Immigration Court in Phoenix after a judge threw out a deportation case against the two and two others. They were taking part in a high school science competition near the Canadian border when the government found out the students were brought to the U.S. illegally as toddlers.

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