



Joint Statement on New Immigration Law in Alabama

October 11, 2011

The harsh new immigration law now going into effect in Alabama is a tragedy for children, families, and educators. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Plyler v. Doe* in 1982 that all students are entitled to a quality public education, regardless of immigration status. The recent decision to allow the provision of Alabama's law that requires school officials to ask about students' citizenship or immigration status has created an atmosphere of fear in public schools, and has already resulted in a drop in attendance.

Classroom teachers and educators work to care for their students and help them learn and grow, not serve as immigration-law enforcers. This heavy-handed provision places an undue burden on teachers and jeopardizes their abilities to do their job, and threatens the education of every child.

TESOL International Association and its Affiliate Alabama-Mississippi Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (AMTESOL) stand with educators and civil rights leaders across the United States in opposition to this law, and urge the U.S. Justice Department to vigorously challenge its legality.

Note: On October 14, 2011 a federal appeals court panel issued a preliminary injunction on the provision of Alabama's immigration law that required schools to collect and report on students' immigration status, as well as a provision that required aliens to carry documentation with them at all times. Other challenges to the law continue their way through the U.S. court system.