

Selected, Edited, and with Issue Framing Material by:
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ISSUE

write in Chicago style with

at least five outside sources per essay



Should Children of Undocumented Immigrants Have a Birthright to U.S. Citizenship?

YES: Eric Foner, from "Birthright Citizenship Sets America Apart," <http://host.madison.com>, *The Cap Times* (August 20, 2010)

NO: George F. Will, from "An Argument to Be Made about Immigrant Babies and Citizenship," *The Washington Post* (March 28, 2010)

Learning Outcomes

After reading this issue, you will be able to:

- Understand the criteria established for the granting of citizenship to children of undocumented immigrants.
- Identify and explain significant American values that are supportive of granting birthright citizenship.
- Comprehend and explain why a critical examination of the Fourteenth Amendment is crucial to the discussion of this issue.
- Understand how both Foner and Will employ the U.S. Constitution and the law to support their ideas.
- Understand birthright citizenship within the context of the larger current immigration issue.

ISSUE SUMMARY

YES: Distinguished professor of history at Columbia University, Eric Foner examines the legal and constitutional basis for granting birthright citizenship and argues that this right illuminates the strength of American society.

NO: Conservative newspaper columnist and commentator, George F. Will is troubled by the facile tendency to grant birthright citizenship to the children of undocumented immigrants. He views this practice as reflecting a misinterpretation of the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment. He vigorously opposes this policy.

In the 2012 presidential election campaign intense immigration policy looms large as an issue that will decide the outcome in key states. This development reflects the growing strength of Latinos within the electorate, especially in states such as Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, among others. Several states, including Arizona, Alabama, and Georgia, have passed laws that supporters of immigration view as draconian and anti-Hispanic. The failure to pass the Dream Act (which would provide relief, and education, for alien minors), a

measure that would provide a pathway to citizenship for those who complete a college degree or serve in the military, has added to the controversy.

The legislative initiatives that have been passed in states mentioned above have generated significant social protest and a test of the constitutionality of such laws that is pending within the U.S. Supreme Court. This issue and related concerns have tended to resurface at various times throughout American history. For example, it was a major issue during the early 1920s and in response the nation passed several anti-immigration statutes such as the

