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- (1) Securing access to a free, public education for all
 - a. regardless of citizenship status
- (2) benefits to access to free public education for all
 - a. economic
 - b. health
- (3) impacts of immigration enforcement in school
 - a. absenteeism
 - b. achievement
 - c. social, emotional

1. Benefits to free public education

- a. In 1982, Plyler v. Doe ensured that all children in US schools would receive a free public education, regardless of citizenship status.
 - i. highly recommend that this bill ensure language to fortify that protection, for the sake of Vermont's social, professional, and economic future. In the notes I have submitted, I include language that has been used elsewhere to protect the students' rights and the state's sovereignty/ local control.
 - ii. Over the past four decades, an estimated **3 million adults** have benefited; currently about 1.8 million undocumented children are being educated

Beyond educational impact, protecting a free public education for all

- b. Grew state and local government **bottom lines**.
 - i. Total state and local income taxes paid by Plyler beneficiaries over their lifetimes **exceeded** the state and local costs of educating them **by over \$633 billion**
 - ii. prevented almost **3/4 Million** US-born children of recipients from growing up in poverty (730K)
 - iii. **individual income:**
 - 1. Increased by \$171 billion between 1982 and 2022
 - 2. More importantly, this will increase **GDP** by \$2.71 trillion over their lifetimes.

- iv. allowed more than 350,000 adult beneficiaries to work in jobs typically requiring some college education.
 - 1. **One in 5 work** in industries that typically require many college-educated workers, education and healthcare (!)
 - a. VT Shortage of health care workers
 - v. Overall, U.S. economy would shrink significantly,
 - 1. **income losses** over the lifetimes of Plyler beneficiaries amount to more than **\$1 trillion**
 - c. Health
 - i. number of health outcomes,
 - 1. obesity, lifetime disability, infant mortality, infant health, childhood influenza, mental health
 - ii. reducing healthcare costs
 - 1. estimates minimum **\$28.9 billion** since 1982
 - d. Summary of Plyler's **educational, economic, and health outcomes**
2. Prior research on immigration raids and ICE activity around schools has shown:
- a. Absenteeism/ attendance
 - Using longitudinal national data from 2014-18, **absenteeism** spiked by up to 11% in the weeks following a raid. In addition, districts sustained a 2% decline in **attendance** when two or more events occurred in the area ([Kirksey, 2024](#))
 - Following April 2018 raids in Hendrickson TN, researchers documented a **substantial spike in absences** from school in the month following the raid (400% increase among children of immigrant parents) as well as **significant increases in exclusionary disciplinary actions** and in diagnoses of **substance use disorder, depression, self-harm, suicide attempts or ideation, and sexual abuse** in the year following the raid ([Heinrich et al., 2022](#))
 - b. Achievement:
 - activation of Secure Communities was associated with **decreased average achievement** for Hispanic students in ELA as well as Black students in ELA and math. Similarly, increases in removals are associated with decreases in achievement for Hispanic and Black students ([Bellows, 2019](#))
 - Rise in absenteeism **and drop in high school math achievement** following immigration raids, as well as a decline in their perceptions of school culture, climate, and sense of safety ([Kirksey & Sattin-Bajaj, 2021](#))

- Drop in **test scores for all student groups** following immigration enforcement actions ([Bennett et al.,2025](#))
- c. **Student behaviors**([Ee & Gándara, 2019](#))
- **80% of teachers reported increased behavioral** and/or emotional problems following immigration enforcement activities,
 - 80% also reporting their **students expressing fears at school**
 - 2/3 reporting increased bullying incidents

Tightening the Language

Clarify Definitions

- **P1 Ln 19: “Federal immigration authority”**
 - Expand to addresss
 - *any local, state, or regional entities with whom it has entered into an agreement* with enforcement of immigration law and border entry...
 - **P2 L4: Nonpublic area of a school site**
 - Include school busses and bus stops, ECE centers and IHEs
 - **P2 Ln 10: “includes employees”**
 - Specify School Employees to include anyone assigned to service in a school- School definition c/should also include all ECE centers and IHEs
3. **P.3, e.2, line 15: Directory**
- a. Recommend expanding to include student data systems (SDS) and other repositories—these are often 3rd party vendors

Appendix A: Economic impact at state level of not ensuring free public education for all

Plyler's impact on income gains (and potential losses if *Plyler* is reversed) is significant at the state and local levels.

Net Income Gains & Losses at the State & Local Levels

		Net Income Gains of Adult <i>Plyler</i> Beneficiaries over Their Working Lives	Net Future Income Losses if Currently Undocumented Children Were Excluded from Schools
	CALIFORNIA	\$655 billion	-\$99 billion
	LOS ANGELES METRO AREA	\$240 billion	-\$32 billion
	TEXAS	\$373 billion	-\$237 billion
	NEW YORK	\$175 billion	-\$53 billion
	NEW YORK CITY METRO AREA	\$228 billion	-\$94 billion
	FLORIDA	\$146 billion	-\$172 billion
	ILLINOIS	\$121 billion	-\$11 billion
	CHICAGO METRO AREA	\$112 billion	-\$9 billion
	ARIZONA	\$89 billion	-\$29 billion
	PHOENIX METRO AREA	\$61 billion	-\$17 billion

Source: FWD.us estimates based on 2022 American Community Survey data. See Methodology for more information.

References

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- Kirksey, J. J., & Sattin-Bajaj, C. (2021). Immigration Arrests and Educational Impacts: Linking ICE Arrests to Declines in Achievement, Attendance, and School Climate and Safety in California. *AERA Open*, 7. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23328584211039787>

Briefs and Blogs:

- d. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/edcentral/granting-undocumented-students-access-to-public-education-delivers-633-billion-return-on-investment/>