

# Judge: 'Wilson Four' were wrongly targeted

**Daniel González**

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It looks like the long court saga against the Wilson Four is over.

A federal immigration appeals board on Nov. 29 concluded that the former Wilson Charter High School students in Phoenix had been wrongly targeted by immigration officials at the Canadian border because of their Hispanic appearance.

As a result, a federal immigration judge in July, 2005, was right to throw out the deportation cases against them, the board concluded in a statement rejecting the government's appeal.

Judy Flanagan, the students' lawyer, said Monday she hopes the ruling puts an end to the case once and for all.

"It's been four years now. It would be nice for it to end," she said.

A spokeswoman for Immigration and Customs Enforcement said the government hasn't decided whether to pursue the case further.

In June, 2002, the students traveled to upstate New York to participate in a solar-powered boat competition. During a side trip to Niagara Falls, immigration officials at the Canadian border interrogated the students for nine hours, and after determining they were in the country illegally, began deportation proceedings.

Their case drew national attention. The students became symbolic of the tens of thousands of undocumented students enrolled in U.S. schools. A bipartisan bill allowing undocumented students to apply for legal status as long as they graduate from high school, attend college and meet other criteria, is expected to be reintroduced in Congress next year.

Although the so-called Wilson Four - Luis Nava, , Jaime Damian, Yuliana Huicochea, and Oscar Corona - no longer have to worry about deportation, they face limited futures because they still don't have legal status, Flanagan said.

All four remain in the Phoenix area. Nava is completing a second bachelor's degree at Arizona State University, Damian is the father of twins, Corona has petitioned for a visa through his U.S. citizen wife. Huicochea is an advocate for undocumented students.