

# Pasadena ISD ordered to reinstate illegal aliens

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A federal judge Tuesday ordered the Pasadena Independent School District to reinstate four illegal alien custodians fired in February because they gave false Social Security numbers to district officials.

The four, all with several years experience with the district, violated district policy by giving the false numbers.

Their attorney, Isaias Torres, argued in court that they were caught in a "Catch-22" situation. Since all four have been in this country since 1982, they qualify under a 1986 immigration act to apply for legal status. But their chances of approval are diminished if

they are unemployed, Torres told U.S. District Judge Gabrielle McDonald.

He said the four custodians had no way of obtaining valid Social Security numbers because of their illegal status and that the mechanism to allow them to work legally while their residency applications are being processed does not exist now.

McDonald, in ordering the workers reinstated with back pay, agreed with Torres.

She said Congress, in passing the immigration law, did not intend to put applicants "between a rock and a hard place."

The firing of aliens for no reason other than giving a false Social Security number violates the law's intent, she said.

The workers are Maria Hernandez, Reina Raquel

Guillen, Blanca Lydia Lopez and Maria Antonia Garza.

Pasadena ISD attorney Kelly Frels said the workers knew they were wrong to submit false Social Security numbers and knew they would be fired if caught doing so.

He said the numbers were found to be false after the four completed the new W-4 tax forms.

Frels also argued there had been no attempt to discriminate against the four Hispanics or "they wouldn't have been hired in the first place."

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of about 100 Hispanic employees of the district.

McDonald said the application of the district policy was discriminatory because Hispanics would be the ones most likely affected.