



# Latinos and American Law: Landmark Supreme Court Cases

*Carlos R. Soltero*

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To achieve justice and equal protection under the law, Latinos have turned to the U.S. court system to assert and defend their rights. Some of these cases have reached the United States Supreme Court, whose rulings over more than a century have both expanded and restricted the legal rights of Latinos, creating a complex terrain of power relations between the U.S. government and the country's now-largest ethnic minority. To map this legal landscape, *Latinos and American Law* examines fourteen landmark Supreme Court cases that have significantly affected Latino rights, from *Botiller v. Dominguez* in 1889 to *Alexander v. Sandoval* in 2001.

Carlos Soltero organizes his study chronologically, looking at one or more decisions handed down by the Fuller Court (1888-1910), the Taft Court (1921-1930), the Warren Court (1953-1969), the Burger Court (1969-1986), and the Rehnquist Court (1986-2005). For each case, he opens with historical and legal background on the issues involved and then thoroughly discusses the opinion(s) rendered by the justices. He also offers an analysis of each decision's significance, as well as subsequent developments that have affected its impact. Through these case studies, Soltero demonstrates that in dealing with Latinos over issues such as education, the administration of criminal justice, voting rights, employment, and immigration, the Supreme Court has more often mirrored, rather than led, the attitudes and politics of the larger U.S. society.

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