

# Wisconsin v Yoder

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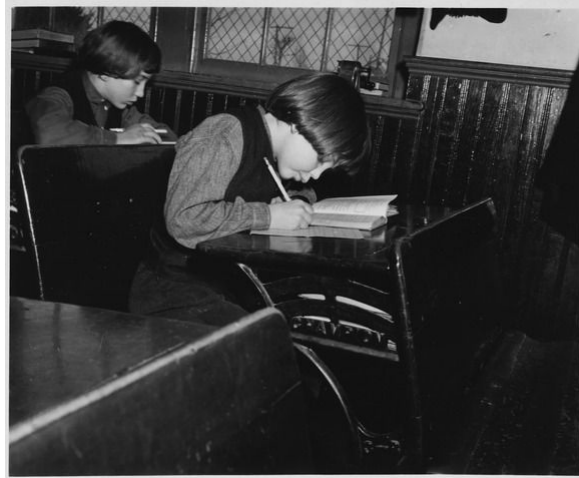
# Facts

- The court was disputed between three different Amish families and the state of Wisconsin.
- The three Amish fathers: Jonas Yoder, Wallace Miller, and Adin Yutzy refused to enroll their children, aged 14 and 15, in public or private schools after they had completed the eighth grade.
- The Fathers sincerely held to the belief that the values their children would learn at home would surpass the worldly knowledge taught in school.



# Decision

The Court ruled that the Wisconsin compulsory school attendance law was not applicable to the Amish under the free-exercise clause.



Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Wisconsin-v-Yoder>

# Opinion overview

After discussion, the court came to the conclusion that individual's interests in the free exercise of religion, go beyond State's mandatory school attendance passed the eighth grade. Majority opinion found that progressing past eighth grade was "in sharp conflict with the fundamental mode of life mandated by the Amish religion". Any further education was found to be irrelevant because it would not educate those in question.

Source: <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1971/70-110>

# How it Relates to First Amendment

The Supreme Court ruled that Wisconsin's compulsory school attendance law was unconstitutional as applied to the Amish because it violated their First Amendment right to free exercise of religion. The Free Exercise Clause accompanies the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution which together state that Congress shall make no law prohibiting the free exercise of religion.

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Wisconsin-v-Yoder>

# Impact on Society

It brought together two areas of legal interpretation: parental control over education and the free exercise of religion. There were mixed reactions to the case, for some it extended both constitutional protection of religious freedom and parental control over education. But for others, it limited its precedential value and actually restricted religious exemptions in future cases, since the Court, when making the ruling, described the Amish community as “unique in nature”. Some people thought that the Court was neglecting the children's interests, distinct from their parents and their right to a lifestyle choice beyond the Amish community.

Source:

<https://law.jrank.org/pages/22905/Wisconsin-v-Yoder-Significance.html>

# Similar Court Cases

***McDaniel v. Paty* (1978):** The court looked at if a Tennessee law barred members of clergy from serving in public office. Court ruled the law violated the first amendment.

***Marsh v. Chambers* (1983):** The court looked at whether Nebraska legislature violated the first amendment in its practice of opening each session with prayer by a chaplain paid by public funds. The court ruled it does not violate establishment clause of the first amendment.

***Wallace v. Jaffree* (1985):** The court examined an Alabama law that authorized periods of meditation or voluntary prayer. The court ruled that the law violated the establishment clause because it had no secular purpose.

Sources:

<https://billofrightsintstitute.org/cases/>