

Joseph Cohen Lecture Series: Peter H. Schuck

By Professor Kris Kobach

On Feb. 20, 2007, Yale Law Professor and holder of Yale's Simeon Baldwin Chair, Peter H. Schuck, delivered the annual Cohen Lecture in the newly renovated E.E. (Tom) Thompson Courtroom. Schuck, who is among the country's most well-known and respected professors of Immigration Law, spoke on the topic, *Immigration: The Disconnect Between Public Policy and Public Opinion*. Schuck reviewed the history of immigration legislation in Congress and noted that, for decades, Congress has pursued policies that are more expansionist than public opinion, as revealed consistently in polls spanning more than two decades.

He explored the sources for the gap between public opinion and public policy on this national issue, noting that immigration specialists



Left to right: Professor Bob Klonoff, Professor Kris Kobach, Dr. Mary Cohen, Professor Peter Schuck and Dean Ellen Suni

in legal academia also are far more expansionist than is the general public.

Schuck drew attention to a recent trend in state legislatures, which have been responding to restrictionist public opinion and enacting laws to discourage illegal immigration, typically by denying various public benefits to illegal aliens. He was careful to

distinguish between “immigration policy”—controlling who may enter the country legally—and “immigrant policy”—determining the entitlements of noncitizens once they are in the country. He concluded that states have some often-overlooked advantages in addressing immigrant policy.