

THE PROENGLISH Advocate

States legislate to end foreign language driver's tests

The individual state legislatures have been keeping the official English movement very busy. In March 2011, English became the official international language for aviation, and now a handful of U.S. states are beginning to echo this policy with regard to testing requirements for state driver's licenses.

Currently, legislation to require that driver's license exams be given in no languages other than English is being considered in Montana, Georgia, Missouri, Tennessee, Indiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Of these seven, six have already made English the official language of the state.

In Indiana, a pro-enforcement, Arizona-style immigration bill (SB 590) contains provisions to simply provide implementation rules to enforce the 27-year-old official English law of Indiana. A second bill in Indiana, HB 1255, would require that all official state documents, communications, and such things as driver's manuals are printed in no language other than English.

Mississippi has a bill, HB 327, sponsored by Rep. Moore (R) that would require applicants for driver's license tests and for state-assisted welfare benefits to first demonstrate English language proficiency.

During the hearing before the Montana House Committee on Transportation, sponsor Rep. Janna Taylor effectively debunked a common opposition argument that limiting driver's exams to one language, English, is discriminatory toward immigrants and their native cultures. "The only way to have things *non-discriminatory* are to have the exam be available in every language under the sun or have it available in English only," said Taylor. Her bill is HB 302 and has already passed the House.

Missouri may have the strongest bill of all. HB 167, introduced by Rep. Jerry Nolte (R-33rd), would require that driver's license written and skills exams are administered in no languages other than English. The bill also rightly prohibits the use of interpreters for any portion of the exam. The bill passed the

House on March 10th, and prior to the final vote, one amendment was adopted to allow tests in English sign language in addition to spoken English.

Limiting driver's license tests to the English language is simply in keeping with the longstanding official English laws of many of these states.

Requiring English proficiency as a prerequisite to drive on U.S. roads is consistent with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration regulations, which requires drivers engaged in interstate commerce to read or speak the English language sufficiently to converse with the general public, to understand highway traffic signs and signals in the English language, to respond to official inquiries and to make entries on reports and records.

What is required of truck drivers to protect public safety in interstate commerce should be required to protect the safety of all motorists.



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Georgia GOP benches common-sense English bill

To rectify the expensive problem of multilingualism and to promote highway safety in Georgia, Rep. James Mills, R-Gainesville, introduced HB 72 once again to require that driver's license tests be given exclusively in English. This legislation passed the House in 2009 and the Senate in 2010 on bipartisan votes, but time ran out to vote on the bill during the last hour of the 2010 session. Both Rep. Mills and ProEnglish are determined to finally push this bill through the legislature once and for all this year.

On February 2, ProEnglish board member Phil Kent testified before the Georgia House Committee on Public Safety in favor of HB 72, a bill that would require driver's license written exams to be administered in the national language of all U.S. roads and in the official language of the state—English. After all of the witnesses testified, which included a representative from the ACLU who was opposed to the bill, the committee passed the bill out of committee and sent it to the House floor by a vote of 8 to 2.

The success of HB 72 would

have broken the dangerous current practice of giving the exams in 13 foreign languages, ranging from Arabic to Spanish to Vietnamese. Rep. Mills continually emphasized that “permanent residents who intend to make Georgia their home need to be able to answer in English the basic questions asked on this important test.” (A practice exam in English is available on the DDS website so test-takers can familiarize themselves with it.) HB 72 does not apply to those on temporary visas for the first 10 years they are in Georgia. The foreign driver's licenses of international business executives, tourists and students will still be honored. The Mills bill is not “unconstitutional” nor does it “go against the Civil Rights Act,” as some opponents claim. The federal government has never objected in court to the nine states that have this English driver's license test law on the books, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 doesn't mention “language” at all.

Despite these facts, HB 72 never reached a final vote when it went to the House floor. State Rep. BJ Pak

(R-Lilburn-102nd), a multiculturalist freshman Republican who opposed the legislation all along, offered a bill-killing amendment which so badly weakened the overall effect and intent of HB 72 that the Public Safety and Homeland Security Committee Chairman, Rep. Tim Bearden (R-Villa Rica-68th), motioned to table (to kill) the bill for the time being because he did not want to accept this watered-down version.

The Pak Amendment allows the state of Georgia to continue administering driver's written exams in all 13 foreign languages. It essentially gutted the entire bill, but added a requirement that the English-language road sign test should include 5 additional signs that contain more than three English language words, such as “*Use Caution, Hazardous Conditions Ahead.*”

Simply put, the Pak Amendment maintains the status quo of fostering immigrant isolation in Georgia. Non-English-speaking or limited proficient immigrant groups (or non-proficient native-born Americans) are harmed when

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The ProEnglish Advocate

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1601 N. Kent Street, Suite 1100
Arlington, Virginia 22209
tel. (703) 816-8821 fax (571) 527-2813
Website: www.proenglish.org

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Congress

Sen. Inhofe and Rep. Steve King introduce official English bills



Rep. Steve King

Last month, Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla. and Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa got the ball rolling in the new Congress by each introducing the English Language Unity Act of 2011, which would require the federal government to conduct its official duties in English.

This time around, the prospects of passing this bill in the House look promising, as Rep. King introduced his bill on March 10th with 60 original cosponsors, a list that is almost *double* the number of original supporters in the last Congress.

Upon introducing their legislation, Sen. Inhofe and Rep. King expressed their support in a joint statement. "This legislation will provide much-needed commonality among United States citizens, regardless of heritage," Inhofe said. "As a nation built by immigrants, it is important that we share one vision and one official language."

Rep. King emphasized the need for national cultural unity and pointed out the pattern of divisiveness that plagues so many bilingual and multilingual nations throughout the world. "A common language is the most powerful unifying force known throughout history," King said. "We need to encourage assimilation of all legal immigrants in each generation. A nation divided by language cannot pull together as effectively as a people."

Both King and Inhofe have been long-time champions of establishing a common, national language for the United States. If passed and signed into law, the English Language Unity Act will make English the official language of the United States,

require the establishment of a uniform language requirement for naturalization, and set the framework for uniform testing of English language ability for candidates for naturalization.

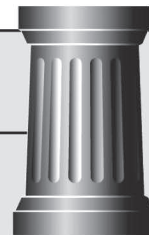
Critics continue to argue that official English would be discriminatory and hostile to immigrants' native languages and cultures, but ProEnglish believes that encouraging English as our common, unifying language is good national policy. "Opponents claim that official English would somehow harm immigrants, even though it would have no effect on non-governmental communications," explained ProEnglish Director of Government Relations Suzanne Bibby.

"Adopting English as the official language would greatly help immigrants, as study after study proves that those who know English get better jobs, earn more money over a lifetime, are more successful in school, and receive better health care than those who cannot speak the language," said Bibby.

Since the new Congress is looking for new areas to cut spending and decrease the severely bloated federal budget, they needn't look any further; passing the King/Inhofe bill would remove an enormous, multi-billion dollar a year burden off the backs of American taxpayers.

This year, the climate is ripe and the American people want to see the new Congress pushing popularly supported, common-sense legislation that has been neglected in recent years. The time has come for Congress to restore much-needed cultural unity in our nation and to pass the English Language Unity Act.

King's bill in the House has been designated H.R. 997 and Inhofe's bill in the Senate has been designated S. 503.



In the Courts



Renewed Push for Translation Services

The U.S. Department of Justice has signaled that the federal government will be cracking down on schools to make school-to-home communications more accessible to parents with limited English skills. A settlement agreement was reached between the Philadelphia School District and the Department of Justice after a number of attacks on Asian students were recorded at South Philadelphia High School. The settlement required the district to inform limited English proficient (LEP) parents by the start of the school year or no later than 10 days after their child is identified as an English-language learner (ELL) that the district provides free translation services to parents. Cong Wang, the director of the school system's translation and interpretation center, said the district is spending \$5.57 million on services each year. The December 15 agreement applies only to that specific school, but attorneys argue that this decision could be a slippery slope.

On February 17, the Justice Department released a memo explaining that the Obama administration was placing a high priority on access to language services. The memo recommends eight action items, including the requirement that all government agencies establish a language-access working group. The memo further explains that every federal agency must carry out Executive Order 13166 to "develop and implement a system by which limited-English proficient persons can meaningfully access the agency's services."

In the last year, the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education has opened compliance reviews in five school districts to determine if communication with parents of ELLs is acceptable. The districts are Dearborn, Michigan; Hazelton, Pennsylvania; Los Angeles, California; New London, Connecticut; and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Alabama Supreme Court misses the mark

Last month, the Alabama state Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit that sought to stop Alabama from giving the state driver's license written exam in multiple languages and require the test be given in English. Without explanation, the justices upheld a lower court ruling dismissing a lawsuit that challenged the multiple languages.

State Sen. Scott Beason (R-Gardendale) and several other Alabama residents sued Gov. Bob Riley in 2008. They claimed the use of multiple languages violated Alabama's constitution, which says English is the official language of the state. Amendment 509 to the Alabama Constitution was adopted in 1990 by voters in a statewide referendum that won by a 9-1 margin. The amendment reads in part, "English is the official language of the state of Alabama....The legislature and officials of the state of Alabama shall take all steps necessary to insure that the role of English as the common language of the State of Alabama is preserved and enhanced."

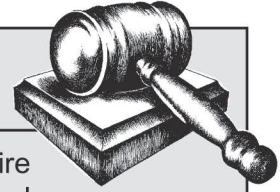
Montgomery County Circuit Judge Johnny Hardwick dismissed the suit because he said it was too similar to litigation the Alabama Supreme Court had previously rejected. Sen. Beason appealed to the Supreme Court, which affirmed the lower court's decision 5-0.

ProEnglish Executive Director Jayne Cannava said, "This is an outrageous decision in which the court majority agreed to suspend common sense, parse the meaning of words, and fantasize in order to violate the state's constitution and overrule the vast majority of the people of Alabama. It calls into question whether we live in a constitutional republic or an autocracy ruled by activist judges."

New Oakland law difficult to implement

In 2008, an Oakland California Chinese-speaking couple was robbed at gunpoint. The victims called 911, but could not understand the automated message because they did not

In the Courts



understand English. They tried to give their statement at the police station, but none of the employees spoke Chinese. The crime report was only available in English.

Ten years ago, Oakland passed the Equal Access to Services ordinance. The intent of the ordinance was to give residents who were limited English proficient access to city services. The ordinance established "threshold languages." If 10,000 or more limited speakers speak a certain language, city officials must hire bilingual interpreters for city departments and agencies and translate public documents into that language.

The only languages so far that have met this requirement are English and Spanish. The

ordinance requires the city to hire translators and provide translated public outreach materials. Every city department is also required to provide a taped recording stating basic information about the hours of operation and services provided.

After the robbery, four community outreach groups filed a lawsuit against Oakland claiming it had not complied with the law. In the settlement, announced in February, the city agreed to comply with the key provisions of the law. Oakland also agreed to pay the plaintiff's \$400,000 in legal fees.

Critics of the ordinance argue that it is a waste of taxpayer dollars and that it ultimately removes the incentive for immigrants to learn English.

States legislate to require English driver's tests • Continued from page 1

After all, all road signs, including those for school zones and construction zones, are written in English!

There are two states where legislative efforts have run into roadblocks. In Georgia, ProEnglish board member Phil Kent testified before the House Public Safety committee in favor of HB 72 to make English the sole testing language, but later, the bill was temporarily derailed when the House GOP adopted a gutting amendment offered by Rep. BJ Pak (R).

In Tennessee, two Senate committee hearings that were

supposed to consider and vote on SB 10, Rep. Ketron's bill to make English the sole driver's test language, were postponed. Numerous reports revealed that newly-elected Gov. Haslam (R) had "concerns" over the bill because it may "harm Tennessee's attractiveness to foreign corporations and hurt business investment." Unfortunately, this argument has been frequently used time and again by those opposed to official English laws. Clearly, foreign corporations don't base multi-million dollar investment decisions on anything as trivial as

driver's license exams. Instead, they are motivated by things like access to markets, tax rates, incentives, transportation infrastructure, and the availability of a skilled and (English) literate workforce.

Thus far, 2011 will no doubt be a productive year for ending the confusing, inconsistent, quasi-multilingualism that does nothing but weaken a cohesive national identity and actually disadvantages immigrants rather than helping them to grasp and understand what their new community expects of them.

"We're one nation, out of many one, and one of the things that unites us is in fact the language, so it is actually a much more compassionate thing to do for all citizens of this nation, to have English as the official language of the United States."

— Congressman Tom Price

ProEnglish News



Porter elected Chairwoman of the Board of Directors



Rosalie Porter

In February, Dr. Rosalie Pedalino Porter was elected Chairman of the ProEnglish Board of Directors. Bob Park stepped down as Chairman after serving for seventeen years and remains on the Board. He has been involved in citizenship, language and immigration issues for 48 years, including a 30-year career with the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Bob's commitment to preserving English as our common language, and making it our official language, stems from his first-hand experience dealing with language issues during his long career with the immigration service. "As chairman of the board, Bob has been a consistently inspiring leader. Living up to his standards is a real challenge," said Dr. Porter.

Porter, an accomplished author and scholar, has served on the ProEnglish Board for five years. She is a consultant to school districts across

the country, and has advised the U.S. Congress on language and education issues, though she arrived in America at age six, not knowing a word of English.

Throughout her professional career she has advocated strongly in favor of English-language education in our public schools and against the failed experiment called "bilingual education." Her background includes teaching, directing English-as-a-Second Language programs, a research fellowship at Harvard University and an earned doctorate from the University of Massachusetts.

She has delivered public lectures for the U.S. State Department in Bulgaria, China, Finland, Japan, Israel, Italy and Turkey. Porter has served as an expert witness in court cases relating to the education of non-English-speaking students in California, New Mexico, New York, and Texas. She is the author of *Forked Tongue: The Politics of Bilingual Education, Language and Literacy for English Learners*, and *American Immigrant: My Life In Three Languages*.

Georgia GOP benches common-sense English bill • Continued from page 2

learning English is delayed, but the Pak amendment ensures that incentives to learn English remain removed. Policies like the Pak Amendment keep immigrants dependent on taxpayer-funded, state-run multilingual services in order to carry out their day-to-day activities, like driving a car.

Thanks to the unfortunate naiveté and last minute confusion of so

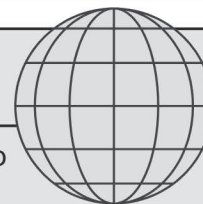
many Republican representatives—30 Republicans voted for it—the destructive Pak Amendment passed by a close vote of 88 to 78. However, House and Senate proponents should nevertheless try to resurrect and eventually pass the bill with its original intent restored, and of course, ProEnglish is not giving up on passing HB 72 this year!

Lawmakers should not be distracted by the Pak amendment. Restoring the original language and passing HB 72 will not only promote public safety, it will encourage more non-English speakers to learn the official language of Georgia, and it will reinforce the incentives and benefits of assimilating in order to become a permanent resident of the state.

"I'm against English as a second language. My great-grandmother came here as a German. She didn't have someone give her English as a second language. She learned it in three months. It's survival."

— Former First Lady, Barbara Bush

Around the World



New 'English Goddess' Born in India

If there are any doubts that English is the language of opportunity, a small village in northern India is building a temple to honor a new English Goddess that they believe will help them climb the social and economic ladder of India.

The Dalit (historically labeled as the "Untouchables" at the lowest end of the caste system) people of Banka village have found what they believe to be their best chance at upward mobility—the English language.

According to Shiv Shankar Lal Nigam, a local school principal in the province where the temple is being built, the importance of English in India cannot be overstated. "It's not possible to get by in today's world without English," said Lal Nigam. "Even to communicate with people in other Indian states, you need to know either the local language or English. Since you cannot learn multiple Indian languages, English has to be used as the link language."

Recently, the villagers began constructing a temple to honor the English Goddess, whose statue holds a pen in her right hand and a book—the Constitution of India—in her left hand to symbolize literacy and education.

A representation of opportunity and success, the statue of the English Goddess stands about two feet tall and is modeled after the United States' Statue of Liberty.

More European Leaders Declare Multiculturalism a 'Failure'

Last October, German Chancellor Angela Merkel sent shock waves around the world by boldly proclaiming that the "multikulti" concept in Germany had, in her words, "failed, utterly failed."

Throwing aside past notions of state-sponsored multiculturalism, Merkel instead insisted that immigrants coming to Germany

should learn German and adapt to German culture.

Following Merkel's proclamation, other major European leaders have spoken out reaffirming the belief that multiculturalism has been unsuccessful not only in Germany but also all across Europe.

At an international security conference in February of this year, British Prime Minister David Cameron declared that his country's policy of multiculturalism has "failed." "Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and the mainstream," said Cameron.

He went on to discuss Britain's increase in Muslim radicalization and explained that it has resulted because Britain has "tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run counter to our values."

Echoing his European counterparts, French President Nicholas Sarkozy also declared in a nationally televised debate in February that multiculturalism was a "failure." "We have been too concerned about the identity of the person who was arriving and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him," Sarkozy said.

Suggesting that assimilation not multiculturalism was in France's best interest, Sarkozy offered these words for newly arrived immigrants: "If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept that, you cannot be welcome in France."

Other leaders around the world have also joined the heads of Germany, Britain, and France in their critique on multiculturalism. Spain's former Prime Minister Jose Aznar and former Australian Prime Minister John Howard have also argued that multiculturalism has been ineffective at successfully integrating immigrants.

Ways to help win the battle for official English online

1. Join ProEnglish's online action alert network: Make your voice heard on official English, bilingual ballots, bilingual education and similar issues. Sign up to receive email alerts when things are happening in Congress. You will get up-to-the-minute information on upcoming votes, talking points, and contact information you can use to email or call your congressmen. To sign up, visit <http://capwiz.com/proenglish/mlm/signup/>.

2. Contact your elected representatives: Express your support for laws to make English the official language, stop government sponsored multilingualism, or expand incentives for immigrants to learn English. To send emails to your elected representatives at no cost, visit our Legislative Action Center online at <http://capwiz.com/proenglish>.

3. Help ProEnglish grow: Tell your friends about our fight to preserve English as the unifying language of our nation. Send them a link to our website at www.proenglish.org. Mention ProEnglish in every email you send by adding information about ProEnglish to your email signature.

4. Write letters to the editor: Write letters in support of making English our official language. Or respond to news stories about English-on-the-job, English in schools, or the use of English by government agencies.

"We are not helping immigrants by making it easier for them to not learn the English language. So if we want people to assimilate, we have to stand up and say, this is our country and English is our language, and the doors of opportunity will open to you once you learn it."

— Congressman Lou Barletta

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