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THE PROENGLISH Advocate

Puerto Rican bill passes House, Senate action looms

Pressured by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) and the Democratic Leadership, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2499, the so-called "Puerto Rico Democracy Act," by a vote of 223-169 on April 29th. One hundred eighty-four Democrats joined 39 Republicans led by Rep. Mike Pence (R-IN) in voting "yes" on final passage. The bill calls for Spanish-speaking Puerto Rico to hold a national referendum on statehood for the fourth time since it became a self-governing U.S. commonwealth in 1952.

Critics, including Puerto Rico's pro-commonwealth Popular Democratic Party and ProEnglish, emphasized that the bill was rigged in favor of statehood. ProEnglish and many congressional opponents also pointed out that no state with an official language other than English has ever been admitted to the union.

"We are gravely concerned now that the bill passed the House," says ProEnglish Executive Director K.C. McAlpin. "The Puerto Rican statehood party and



its allies in Congress are trying to keep the language issue off the table and are willing to rig the process in order to make the island the 51st state. We have to mobilize grassroots opposition and be vigilant now that the bill is in the Senate. We're encouraged, however, that our educational efforts forced the English language issue to the forefront, and it is gratifying that many lawmakers who initially co-sponsored the bill in the House ended up voting no."

"They can't control things in the Senate, however," McAlpin said. "An amendment requiring Puerto Rico to make English the official language of day-to-day government operations as a condition for

statehood will be offered when H.R. 2499 comes up there," he added.

McAlpin was a featured speaker at a May 18 Washington, D.C., briefing hosted by the Heritage Foundation titled "Puerto Rico: The 51st State." At that forum, McAlpin observed that Reps. Dan Burton (R-IN) and Don Young (R-AK) succeeded in attaching a "fake" English amendment to the House bill saying that the "official language requirements of the federal government shall apply to Puerto Rico in the same manner and to the same extent as throughout the United States." However, as ProEnglish repeatedly points out, the U.S. has no official language and legislation to make English the official language has not gotten through Congress regardless of which political party has been in power. "The Burton-Young amendment is a fig leaf," McAlpin said.

Senate Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) could schedule H.R. 2499 for a vote in the Senate at any time.

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English driver's license test bills fail to pass

Despite polls showing wide public support and valiant efforts by lawmakers backed by local ProEnglish activists, legislation requiring driver's license tests to be taken in English failed to pass in Georgia, Tennessee, and Missouri before time ran out this year.

But the bills' authors vow to renew the fight next year which is seen primarily as critical for public safety and only secondarily as a matter of closing loopholes or implementing the spirit or letter of state official English laws.

In Tennessee, State Rep. Eric Watson (R-Cleveland) with active support from Nashville-based ProEnglish national

advisory board member Eddie V. Garcia, succeeded in passing a bill through a key legislative committee. But House Speaker Kent Williams (I-Elizabethton) teamed with Democrats and big business lobbyists and used his power to block the bill in the Rules Committee and stop it from coming to the floor.

Missouri State Rep. Cynthia Davis (R-O'Fallon) also succeeded in passing her bill through committee, but failed to win the backing of House Republican leaders and her bill was bottled up in the rules committee until the session expired.

In Georgia a driver's license test bill sponsored by State Sen. Jack Murphy (R-Cumming)

sailed through the State Senate by a lopsided 39-11 margin and appeared to be a sure bet to pass the House where an almost identical bill passed easily last year. But Georgia House Speaker David Ralston (R-Blue Ridge) reneged on his repeated pledges to call the bill up for a vote until the last day of the session when it got caught up in the press to pass "must-pass" legislation, and it died as time expired.

The number of states that require drivers to pass a driver's license exam in English increased to nine after Oklahoma passed a bill eliminating foreign language driver's license tests last year.

Real world business

"They said you're going to hurt economic development...Do you understand how absurd that is? Who wants to hire a bunch of people you can't talk to?"

— Alabama gubernatorial candidate Tim James defending his position that people pass driver's license tests in English, *Florence, Ala. Times Daily*, May 20, 2010.

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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Administration



President Obama: “they’ll have to learn English” (wink, wink)

During his White House speech commemorating Mexico’s Cinco de Mayo holiday, President Obama spoke about his goal of passing “comprehensive immigration reform” legislation including giving amnesty to as many as 20 million illegal immigrants. To allay public perceptions of pandering to ethnic special interest groups the president said, “They’ve got to admit they broke the law, and pay taxes, and pay a penalty, and *learn English...*”

Like his predecessor President Obama rarely mentions ‘comprehensive immigration reform’ without adding soothing words about requiring amnestied illegal immigrants to learn English. But is it true?

The answer is no. In 2007 President George W. Bush and then-U.S. Senator from Illinois Barack Obama joined in supporting the comprehensive Kennedy-Kyl immigration reform bill that eventually failed. They claimed the bill required anyone getting amnesty to ‘learn English.’ But to qualify for the special “Z” four-year visa the bill created for those receiving amnesty, an alien did NOT have to demonstrate any knowledge of English. And to renew the visa for another four years the amnestied alien simply had to “demonstrate an attempt to gain an understanding of the English language.” That ‘attempt’ could have been as tenuous as enrolling in an English class waiting list.

For eight years the Z-visa holder had to demonstrate no English fluency at all. Then they had three chances to pass the federal naturalization test whose English language fluency section is notoriously watered down. In other words, the claim that “they’ll have to learn English” is false.

Public support for Official English at all time high

The Rasmussen Reports polling organization, one of the most reputable in the nation, recently found— as have other polls in recent years— that Americans continue to overwhelmingly believe that English should be the official language of the United States.

A May 2010 national telephone survey of 1,000 Americans found that 87 percent of adults favor making English the nation’s official language. This

is the highest level of support yet, but in line with what voters have been saying for several years.

Eighty-three percent say a company that is doing business in this country should be allowed to require its employees to speak English. This view, Rasmussen notes, is unchanged from a year ago.

As in previous polling over the years, support for English as the official language of government is high across all demographic groups. However, Republicans consistently support it more strongly than Democrats and adults not affiliated with any party.

Ninety-five percent of those who work in the private sector think companies should be allowed to require their employees to speak English on the job— a view shared, interestingly, by just 69 percent of government employees.

Significantly, 80 percent of voters responded that those who move to the United States should adopt American culture. Again, this level of high support has remained relatively unchanged in recent years.

In a July 2009 speech President Barack Obama actually stated that “instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English, Americans need to make sure your child can speak Spanish.” Yet the majority of Americans disagree. Obama has it backward. Eighty-three percent place a higher priority on encouraging immigrants to speak English as their primary language. Just 13 percent take the opposite view and say it is more important for Americans to learn other languages.

“Other polling also shows that, contrary to the conventional wisdom of the political and media elites, most U.S. Hispanics prefer reading English language newspapers and watching TV in English, even while speaking Spanish at home,” notes ProEnglish Executive Director K.C. McAlpin. “While it is unfortunate that Congress has not moved on implementing English as the official language of the federal government, this latest Rasmussen poll emphasizes that the American people remain strong on this issue. This overwhelming sentiment will continue to help add more states to those 30 whose legislatures have already adopted English as their official language of government,” McAlpin says.

Around the Nation



English policy offends student in PA

A student at the Lancaster, Pa., School of Cosmetology has filed a complaint with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission over a school policy that requires students to speak English. Miriam Rosado, 30, a student in the nail technician program, claims the rule is “discriminatory” and “over-reaching.”

The school’s “Student Rules and Regulations” handbook specifically states: “English is the official language of the school. Any other language should only be used when absolutely necessary. This includes casual conversation between students in the classroom and public areas of the school.”

School Director Debbie Dunn said the policy was enacted at the end of 2006 because of requirements from the National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, which accredits cosmetology schools. The accrediting commission “required this inclusion in our enrollment agreement so all students would understand before signing the enrollment, spending any money and starting the program that the school has an official language,” Dunn said.

However, the accrediting commission says its rule deals with written materials and that, as far as conversation, this is at the school’s discretion.

Rosado told the *Lancaster Intelligencer Journal* that the policy does not present a hardship to her personally because she speaks English, but she needed to translate for a fellow Hispanic student. The school director says that if a student is having trouble understanding an instructor, the student can raise their hand and ask a question. “The instructor, and the instructor only, can then ask for assistance from any student who may speak the same language if the instructor cannot get the point across,” Dunn said. “What we will not allow is students trying to translate for each other while the instructor is lecturing” because it is disruptive to other students.

Furthermore, the school director says students may use whatever language they wish in the restroom, student lounge, parking lot and waiting areas before and after classes. “The student has a choice to attend (the school), or not,” Dunn told the newspaper.

ACLU threatens town over official English law

The tiny town of Jackson, N.Y., (pop. 1,700) found itself facing threats of legal action from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and attracted national media attention after it adopted an ordinance making English its official language this spring. Jackson Councilman Roger Meyer authored the ordinance which won widespread community backing despite local newspaper editorials that harshly condemned the move.

The 76-year-old Meyer was featured on the Fox News Cable TV show “Fox and Friends” to explain his reasoning. Meyer says he proposed the law “to encourage the federal government to make English the official language of the United States.”

“We have records going back to 1816, and they’ve never been written in anything but English,” Meyer says. “This law isn’t changing anything. It’s just making it official that we’re going to do what we’ve been doing for 190 years.”

After Jackson acted, similar laws were proposed and adopted by town leaders in nearby Argyle and Easton.

ProEnglish has been advising Meyer and promised to defend Jackson’s ordinance if the ACLU follows through on its threat to attack the new ordinance in court.

Protecting Arizona Businesses

Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed legislation in June stipulating that nothing in state law requires businesses to provide “trained and

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Around the Nation



competent” interpreters when a non-English speaking customer comes in for service.

Passage of this legislation and its signing into law comes after a determined optometrist’s year-long legal fight over what language services he had to provide for a potential customer. Dr. John Schrolucke said a Spanish-speaking woman brought her 12-year-old son into his office for translation help. However, the doctor feared that allowing the English-speaking child to interpret for the parent could have gotten him into legal trouble. Schrolucke could have faced a malpractice suit if the child did not properly translate some of the more technical explanations to the mother.

The optometrist quite reasonably gave the woman the options of either going to another optometrist who speaks Spanish or bringing in someone 18 years of age or older to translate. Instead, the woman slapped a “discrimination” complaint on him with the state attorney general’s office.

The harassed doctor was given an option to settle, but that would have required him – and anyone who bought his business— to provide interpreters and documents in Spanish. That is something, Schrolucke insisted, that would set a bad precedent for all small businesses.

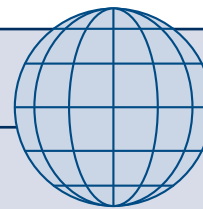
After a year — and the expenditure of the doctor’s own money on legal fees— the attorney general’s office dropped the complaint. In the meantime, however, an outraged Schrolucke approached state Sen. John Huppenthal, R-Chandler, who agreed to sponsor what he called “clarifying language” to the state’s civil rights law. Lawmakers agreed the clarification was obviously needed, and a wrong was righted. In fact, the litigation chief of the attorney general’s civil rights division even offered his own apology to Schrolucke “for what does occasionally end up as state bureaucratic confusion.”

Finally, a happy ending for a principled optometrist who refused to give in to bogus “discrimination” charges on the basis of language.

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. To find out how to add ProEnglish to your email signature, visit us online at www.proenglish.org/howyoucanhelp/emailsignature.html.
- 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. For tips on writing effective letters to the editor, visit our tips page online at www.proenglish.org/howyoucanhelp/letterstotheeditor.html.

Around the World



UK mandates English for immigration

Like the U.S. the United Kingdom is experiencing an unprecedented wave of immigration and serious problems assimilating immigrants due in large part to their inability to speak English. Unlike the U.S., however, the British government is doing something about it.

The British Home Office announced that by the fall of 2010 all non-European immigrants must pass a basic English language test before being granted a visa—the rule includes anyone wanting to join their spouse or family member. “I believe being able to speak English should be a prerequisite for anyone who wants to settle here,” Home Secretary Theresa May said. The new requirement will “help promote integration, remove cultural barriers and protect public services,” she added.

May said the basic requirement is but one of a series of rules that will be forthcoming to foster the more widespread use of English in immigrant communities. The new rule is to make sure “that immigration is properly controlled, alongside a limit on work visas and an effective system for regulating the students who come here.” May said.

For those trying to obtain what the British call a “settlement visa,” the new English fluency test will be added to existing requirements to pass a test on British culture, politics and law.

Canada’s Bilingual Mess

Two recent headlines from the Canadian press highlight the ongoing saga of Canada’s expensive and divisive bilingual predicament:

Quebec language law ‘a mess’: opposition
Military lacking bilingual trainers, language commissioner says

The first story has been written time and time again over the years regarding the French-speaking province of Quebec in Canada. In response to a 2009 Supreme Court of Canada ruling, the Quebec government—again—has

introduced legislation to, in its words; “toughen” the province’s language laws “while maintaining individual rights”

The legislation sets out new rules for admission to English public schools whereby the students accumulate points to help them qualify. According to a story by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), parents must also explain to the Education Ministry why their child should be admitted to the English public system. The Parti Quebecois (PQ) hit the roof over the proposal, telling the CBC that the bill is “a historic mistake.” PQ members want the government to simply continue banning all non-Anglophones from enrolling in English public schools. Referring to the complex point system, PQ member Pierre Curzi said “those criteria will be a mess. It is not helping the situation for anybody.”

What a sad lament about the state of bilingualism in Quebec. A worsening situation, however, concerns Canada’s military.

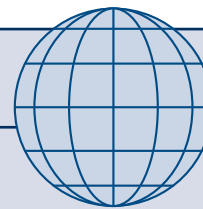
A June 2 article in the Vancouver Sun contained a bleak report regarding how mandated bilingualism isn’t working and how some francophone military instructors suffer the consequences for being in the minority, with few qualified people available to replace them. The article detailed how a harried director of “Official Languages of the Department of National Defense” is trying to implement myriad recommendations as part of a five-year plan “to transform bilingualism policies.”

Unfortunately the paper reports that, according to an internal audit, the Canadian military has fallen far short on obligations to offer training to personnel in both official languages, English and French. In fact, the paper reported 83 percent of training facilities lacked bilingual instructors.

“These findings corroborated numerous comments from instructors and commandants that the delivery of training in the members’

Continued ►

Around the World



official language of choice depends on the ability of francophone instructors to teach both languages,” the audit report said. “We are informed that the francophone instructors were either teaching exclusively in one language or teaching in French and English to meet demand.”

Canada’s laws seek to protect the right of employees in federal institutions to work in the official language of their choice. But wait until other vocal Canadian language groups – just like in the United States— start demanding their “right” to work in the language of their choice.

Language threatens Belgium break-up

“We are close to the abyss,” says Lieven de Winter, a professor of politics at the Universite Catholique de Louvain. “Whether we are five meters or five centimeters away is difficult to say. But Belgians are at a crossroads where they are making a choice on whether they want to live together or not.”

The professor’s comments came on the heels of national elections in Belgium this June that resulted in the stunning success of the Flemish nationalist party in the Dutch-speaking areas of the divided nation. About 40 percent of the population speaks French. A *New York Times* analysis said [the election] dynamites “the fragile unity of a federal country where tensions between French and Dutch speakers run deep, and where voters in one region cannot vote for parties in the other.”

It took nine months to form a government after the last election.

This time tensions are worse – although nationalist party leaders say it is too soon to seek independence for the northern Dutch-speaking region of Flanders.

Besides the nationalists who polled nearly 30 percent of the vote, Flanders gave 12.5 percent of its vote to the separatist Vlaams Belang party and about 4 percent to another populist party, meaning that nearly half of the Flemish electorate voted for language separatists.

Belgium’s 180-year old history contains the seeds of today’s potential breakup. French-speakers in Wallonia dominated the country for most of the 20th century. That fanned resentment in Dutch-speaking Flanders, where many felt relegated to second-class status. Also as Wallonia’s heavy industries like coal and steel declined, the Flemish north increasingly resented subsidizing the less productive south. And neither region wants to learn the language of the other, thus perpetuating the divide.

A June 13 *Times* article notes that the few ties that bind inhabitants together are an archaic “royal family, the cartoon character Tintin and Brussels (the capital).”

In the words of the Universite Catholique de Louvain professor, language barriers could indeed cause the country to go over the abyss.

Government’s Duty

“For too long, the federal government has shirked its duty by not passing English as the official language of the United States.”

— Roger Meyer, Jackson, N.Y., town councilman and author of Jackson’s English-in-government ordinance, *The New York Times*, May 12, 2010.

ProEnglish News



McAlpin moves to US Inc., Cannava named Exec. Director

At its recent meeting in Petoskey, Michigan, the board of ProEnglish announced that its long-time executive director, K.C. McAlpin, had accepted the job of president and executive director of US Inc., ProEnglish's parent organization. To replace McAlpin as executive director the board promoted ProEnglish's current director of government relations Jayne Cannava. The changes are effective July 1.

The board thanked McAlpin for his leadership the last ten years during which ProEnglish greatly expanded its grassroots outreach and earned a reputation as one of the most effective issue advocacy organizations in the nation's capital. McAlpin also was elected to the board of ProEnglish and will continue to provide consulting assistance to the organization during a transition period.

Board Chairman Bob Park said, "We are deeply indebted to our outgoing executive director for ten outstanding years of effective management and leadership. And we appreciate that K.C. McAlpin has agreed to serve on ProEnglish's board and will continue to assist our new executive director."

"We also congratulate Jayne Cannava for accepting the board's vote of confidence, and we anticipate she will continue to expand our membership, as well as our educational efforts



Chairman Bob Park (L) poses with Jayne Cannava and K.C. McAlpin

on Capitol Hill and in key states as we advance our mission of making English the official language of government in the United States," Park added.

Mrs. Cannava, originally from Townsend, Mass., now lives in Arlington, Va., with her husband Mike. She served as ProEnglish's Director of Government Relations for three years, received a law degree from Quinnipiac University and her undergraduate degree from Babson College.

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