

# THE PROENGLISH Advocate

## ProEnglish Applauds West Virginia for Becoming 32nd State to Pass Official English

**O**n March 5, West Virginia became the 32nd state in America to adopt an official English law. Governor Earl Ray Tomblin (D-WV) signed official English legislation into law that was introduced by State Delegate Lynwood "Woody" Ireland (R-07) and State Senator Dave Sypolt (R-14). State Delegate John Overington also worked tremendously hard to get this signed into law.

English is now the official language of government for the state of West Virginia. This will reduce unnecessary government translation costs for the state and encourage greater patriotic assimilation.

The bill passed by 95-4 in the West Virginia State House and by 26-7 in the West Virginia State Senate. Governor Tomblin signed the bill directly rather than risk a potential veto-override.

ProEnglish staff spent countless hours corresponding on the phone and email with Delegate Ireland and

State Senator Sypolt, along with the key committee members of the legislature, educating them on the importance of official English.

"This is great news for the state of West Virginia; it will encourage and empower Americans everywhere who believe English should be our common, unifying language," Executive Director Robert Vandervoort said. "We hope the news will push other states to pass their own version of this law."

Delegate Ireland told The ProEnglish Advocate, "It is gratifying that this bill passed both houses and the Governor signed the bill into law. Special thanks to Delegate Overington and Senator Sypolt, as well as the ProEnglish staff for their hard work."

ProEnglish Government Relations Director Dan Carter stated, "I appreciate everything that legisla-



tors Ireland, Overington, and Sypolt did to get this bill passed and signed into law. It was a pleasure working with them on this important piece of legislation, and we look forward to working with them again on future projects."

# In Congress

## U.S. Senate Sees Increase in Official English Support



Dan Carter and Robert Vandervoort meeting with and educating Senator Mike Lee (R-UT) on the importance of official English

Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) and Senator Mike Rounds (R-SD) are two of the most recent Senate co-sponsors of “The English Language Unity Act” (S. 678). With Senator Cotton and Senator Rounds joining the bill, there are now eight Senators in total who officially support this legislation,

the greatest number of Senators since 2008.

The “English Language Unity Act” (S. 678) would make English the official language for the federal government. It would reduce costly and unnecessary government translations while promoting greater usage of English in our nation. Senator James Inhofe (R-OK) is the original sponsor of the legislation.

“We are thrilled to see the growing support for this legislation in the U.S. Senate,” Executive Director Robert Vandervoort said. “Our legislators are seeing the importance of keeping English as a unifying force for our nation.”

# In the Courts

## Victory at Oregon Supreme Court

A grassroots organization, Oregonians for Immigration Reform (OFIR), is attempting to make English the official language for the state of Oregon as a ballot question for the voters. In order to do so, they need to collect enough signatures for it to be included on the ballot for the November elections.

OFIR had a straightforward ballot question they wanted to place before the voters: “Requires government actions/communications in English (with specified exceptions), limits laws allowing non-English documents/services.”

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum (D) decided she did not like the voters seeing such a basic ballot title and changed the question. Under Oregon law, she intervened and re-

worded the OFIR ballot question to read: “Changes state/“subdivision” (undefined) laws regarding English/other-language use and requirements; exceptions; authorizes lawsuits.”

This new and confusing ballot language would not make any sense to the vast majority of voters, so OFIR challenged AG Rosenblum’s actions in court. With the help of ProEnglish, OFIR was able to present their arguments before the Oregon Supreme Court.

The Oregon Supreme Court sided with OFIR and rebuked the AG for such a confusing ballot title, a significant victory. The AG was forced to rewrite the title into plain English, and OFIR will decide if they want to proceed with the new title from the AG.



## Around the Nation



### ProEnglish Board Member Phil Kent Meets Donald Trump



Phil Kent with Donald Trump

ProEnglish board member Phil Kent recently had a chance to catch up with presidential candidate Donald Trump on the campaign trail. He encouraged the candidate to consider supporting official English and Mr. Trump said he “likes” the idea.

### Ron Unz, Advocate for English Language Immersion, Enters CA Senate Race

Ron Unz, a businessman and philanthropist, has entered the California Senate race. Mr. Unz is known for his successful “English for the Children” initiative that made English immersion the education policy for California public schools over the outdated and unsuccessful bilingual education models.

In 1998, with the support of Ron Unz and ProEnglish Chairwoman Rosalie Porter, Californians passed the “English for the Children” ballot initiative known as Prop. 227 to change education policy by a vote of 61% to 39%. Prop. 227 introduced the method of Structured English Immersion (SEI) for Limited English Proficient Students, by requiring their classes to be taught primarily in English.



Ron Unz

Groups in California who favor bilingual education are looking to repeal Prop. 227 this November. Once again, Unz is advocating for Prop. 227 based on the track record of success that SEI has demonstrated in educating California's children.

## The ProEnglish Advocate

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# Around the Nation

## Ukraine Divided Over Language and Borders

Many are aware of the ongoing conflict in the country of Ukraine, including the Crimean area that is now aligned with Russia. Just as there are violent border conflicts dividing the land of Ukraine, it is divided by language as well. Western Ukraine is predominantly Ukrainian speaking, while Eastern Ukraine is predominantly Russian speaking.

According to Radio Free Europe, the breakaway and Russian-supported Crimean section was supposed to have three official languages: Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatar. This was included in a new Crimean constitution adopted in 2014. The reality has been quite different. Schools that taught in Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar have faced restrictions and are forced to teach in Russian.

Meanwhile in Kiev, the capitol of Ukraine, a nationalist city council member is pushing legislation that would ban the use of Russian in many places. Mr. Yuri Syrotyuk, the council member who introduced the bill says it is needed to overcome “the consequences of the Soviet occupation in the language sphere.”

There are many forces that divide countries and nations, including language. We see it happening in Ukraine today. Let us make sure it does not happen here and that we keep English as our nation’s common language.



*“...If you are to be welcomed to the enjoyment of American liberty, then America has a few expectations of you. One is that you can read the nation’s founding documents and laws and can comprehend the political discourse that precedes the casting of ballots.”*

*-- George F. Will, syndicated columnist.*

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