Obama Rejects English Language Assimilation

by Phyllis Schlafly July 23, 2008

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Barack Obama Says Your

Kids Should Speak Spanish

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One would think that a presidential candidate who has no military service, who survived a public controversy about attending a church for 20 years where the pastor preached "hate America," plus a flap about his refusal to wear an American Flag pin, would bend over backwards to showcase his patriotism. But Barack Obama has just given his critics another reason to question his support of American identity.

Obama said, "Understand this: Instead of worrying about whether immigrants can learn English ... you need to make sure your child can speak Spanish." But who "needs to make sure"? parents? public schools? government nannies?

Expanding on this theme, Obama added, "You should be thinking about how can your child become bilingual... It's embarrassing ... when Europeans come over here, they all speak English ... And then we go over to Europe, and all we can say is Merci beaucoup."

Embarrassed? We surely don't want a President representing our nation in foreign travels who is embarrassed about our country. We want a President who is proud to stand up for America, our culture, our language, our laws and our customs.

Most Americans look upon the English language as the number-one factor that defines our national identity: "e pluribus unum," one nation out of many peoples. We want English to be our national, official language, spoken by all who call themselves Americans.

The Zogby Poll reports that 83 percent of Americans favor legislation to make English our official language. Thirty states have designated English as the official language of their states, and ten more states are considering such legislation.

Obama is pandering to Hispanic voters by suggesting that the rest of us have a duty to speak Spanish. Most Americans not only don't want to speak Spanish, we are annoyed by voices on the telephone telling us to "Press 1 (or sometimes 2) for English," and we are outraged at the thought that a President would try to impose a Spanish obligation on us.

Only 26 percent of Americans, according to a Rasmussen survey, believe that every American should be able to speak two languages. Even that low number would probably nosedive if confronted with the notion that the government might enforce bilingualism on us.

Why should that second language be Spanish? The United States today has immigrants who speak over 200 different languages. Should the Asian immigrants be forced to learn Spanish as well as English?

Obama's statement is not only out of sync with the big majority of Americans, but it is condescending and further evidence of the elitist attitude the Obamas displayed when Barack looked down his nose at Americans whom he said rely on

religion and guns because they are "bitter," and when Michelle said that Barack's campaign was "the first time" she was "really proud of my country."

Americans are not backward hicks because we don't learn a second language. We consider it a waste of time because English is fast becoming the worldwide language and because the ability to speak English is the litmus test of whether or not immigrants are assimilating into the American culture.

Obama conceded that immigrants should learn English but, unfortunately, many do not. The Pew Hispanic Center reported that only 52 percent of Hispanic naturalized citizens speak English well or pretty well, and that 28 percent of Latino immigrants speak only Spanish on the job.

Obama voted against making English our official language on four Senate roll-call votes. In 2006 and 2007 he voted twice against Senator James Inhofe's (R-OK) amendment to repeal Bill Clinton's Executive Order 13166, and voted twice in favor of Senator Ken Salazar's (D-CO) amendment to make Executive Order 13166 stronger than it already is.

Executive Order 13166 discourages assimilation by committing all executive-branch agencies to provide all federal benefits and services in foreign languages (even though the Supreme Court held in Alexander v. Sandoval that immigrants have no right to demand this).

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission discourages assimilation by suing over 200 employers for requiring English to be spoken by employees on the job (even though a Rasmussen survey found that 77 percent of Americans believe that employers should be allowed to do this).

Providing foreign language ballots discourages assimilation (even though only citizens are supposed to vote and to become a naturalized U.S. citizen, the

immigrant must demonstrate "the ability to read, write and speak ordinary English").

Bilingual education (known as language apartheid) discourages assimilation by keeping children with Hispanic-sounding names for years in Spanish-language public school classes (even though bilingual ed has been rejected by the voters in referenda from California to Massachusetts).

It's no surprise that the Rasmussen survey reports that 59 percent of Americans believe government actually encourages immigrants to retain their home-country culture instead of assimilating into America. Senator and Mrs. Obama should tell immigrants to assimilate and get the facts from the new Bradley Foundation report called "E Pluribus Unum: America's National Identity."