Americans Want English As Our Official Language

by Phyllis Schlafly June 20, 2007

Printer Friendly version

Google Ads are provided by Google and are not selected or endorsed by Eagle Forum

Hardly anyone predicted that the Bush-Kennedy-Kyl-Reid steamroller could be stopped. But as the New York Times reported on page one, the "Grass Roots Roared, and an Immigration Plan Fell."

The American people are fed up with the six years of "silent amnesty" President Bush has given us by his refusal to enforce the laws against illegal entry into our country, against hiring illegal aliens, and against allowing visitors to overstay their visas. The American people demanded that Congress reject the 400+-page bill that would grant Z visas to make Bush's silent amnesty permanent.

The grass roots showed their power over the White House, Big Democratic Establishment, Big Republican Establishment, Big Business, Big Unions, Big Media, and Big Church combined. Let's consider just one (largely unreported) of the many terrible proposals hidden in the crevices of the unlamented Kennedy-Kyl immigration bill: a surreptitious attempt to convert us to a bilingual (or even multilingual) nation.

Section 702(b) would have forbidden the government to "diminish" any existing rights under U.S. "laws" that concern services or materials provided by the

government "in any language other than English." This section was given extraordinary scope by Section 702(c), which defined the word "laws" to include "Presidential Executive Orders."

These deviously written sections would thus have exalted Clinton's Executive Order (EO) 13166 to the status of U.S. law. Clinton's EO requires all recipients of federal funds to provide all information and services in any language requested by any recipient of federal funds (such as a private-practice physician who accepts a Medicare or Medicaid patient).

Ergo, all applicants for the new Z visa could apply in any language of their choice. Applicants would even be provided with tax-paid attorneys to demand their Z visas and challenge any rejection.

Clinton's EO 13166 should be repealed and English should be legislated as our official U.S. language. A new Zogby survey reports that 84 percent of Americans support this, one of the highest percentages of Yes votes ever recorded in public opinion polls.

CNN's televised presidential debates highlighted the chasm between the two parties on this issue. When Wolf Blitzer asked all the Democratic candidates "to raise your hand ... if you believe English should be the official language of the United States," only Mike Gravel held up his hand.

A few nights later at the Republican presidential debate, Blitzer asked any candidate to speak up "who doesn't believe English should be the official language of the United States." Only John McCain spoke, hedging his reply by talking about the sovereignty of American Indians in Arizona.

Blitzer followed up with the question "is there anyone else who stands with Senator McCain specifically on that question?" No Republican candidate responded.

A good example of the effect of NOT legislating English as our official language can be seen in the June 22 release of the U.S. Department of Agriculture about the school lunch program. I quote verbatim:

"Please be advised that we have finalized the process of translating the Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application package into 25 different languages . . . Arabic, Cambodian, Chinese (Mandarin), Farsi, French, Greek, Haitian, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Kurdish, Laotian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Samoan, Serbo-Croatian, Somali, Spanish, Sudanese, Tagalog, Thai, Urdu, and Vietnamese."

(Note the discrimination of this list: it omits German and Italian. Does this mean that (a) German and Italian immigrants see to it that their kids learn English, or (b) we no longer accept immigrants from Germany or Italy, or (c) we are still angry at Germany and Italy about World War II?)

Univision, the nation's most-watched Spanish-language television network, has announced it wants to host a Spanish-language TV debate among the 2008 presidential candidates. After specifying that all questions would be asked in Spanish, Univision condescendingly said that candidates may either answer in Spanish or use a translator if they answer in English.

Republican National Committee Chairman Mel Martinez says this is a "terrific" idea. Martinez is part of the problem that contributions to the Republican Party have dropped so low that the Party has laid off all its telephone solicitors.

The Univision invitation illustrates why it is important to recognize English as our official language. Since only citizens may legally vote, and being able to speak English is a requirement for naturalization, there is no necessity for candidates to speak to voters in any language other than English.

When a candidate uses a language other than English (as Mitt Romney is now doing in radio ads), it's like whispering behind the backs of most voters. This is unacceptable because the candidate may be making promises or concessions or innuendoes to a minority bloc, and because the process tends to divide the electorate into political pressure groups.

The English language is the greatest force we have for national unity. It would be a tragic mistake to diminish it.