

# **POSITION PAPER**

## **ENGLISH AS OUR OFFICIAL LANGUAGE**

**By: John W. Wallace**

**In 2003, the Pew Research Center announced the results of an extensive survey on various global trends that it conducted from 2001 to 2003 in which it polled 66,000 people from 50 countries. The survey revealed that there was a global consensus on the need to learn English. The English language has become the worldwide language of business, higher education, diplomacy, aviation, the Internet, science and international travel.**

**Even as more and more people throughout the world are learning to speak English, English as the main language of the people of the United States is on the decline in many areas. This is happening because our government actually encourages immigrants to function in their native languages through bilingual education, multilingual ballots, multilingual driver's license exams and even government-funded translators in schools and hospitals. Providing these services to immigrants in their native languages is expensive for American taxpayers, keeps the immigrants isolated and makes it harder for them to assimilate into the mainstream of American society.**

**The result is that the United States has a rapidly growing population of people--some native born--who are not proficient in English. The 2000 Census found that 21.3 million Americans (8 percent of the population) are classified as "limited English proficient," a 52 percent increase from 1990 and more than double the 1980 total. More than 5 million of these people were born in the United States.**

**Multilingual government is not cheap. Bilingual education alone is estimated to cost taxpayers billions of dollars per year and it is less effective at teaching English than English immersion programs are. Much of the cost for court and school translators, multilingual voting ballots, health care translators and multiple document translations must be paid for by State and local taxpayers.**

**We need only look to at Canada to see the problems a multilingual society can bring. In 1995, the predominately French-speaking province of Quebec came within a few thousand votes of seceding from Canada. The national government must constantly cater to Quebec to preserve order and maintain some semblance of a cohesive government. Unless the United States changes course, we may also be on course for Spanish-speaking states in this country. This would surely cause ethnic resentments, the possible creation of serious ethnic and linguistic separatist movements or even civil war.**

**Declaring English to be the official language of the government would bring back the incentive to learn it. The legislation would require that all laws, public proceedings, regulations, publications, orders, actions, programs, and policies are conducted in the English language. There would, of course, be some commonsense exceptions in the areas of public health and safety, national security, tourism, and commerce.**

**Declaring English the official language of the United States would only apply to the operations of government. People would still be able to speak whatever language they choose at home and in private life. Official English legislation should also be combined with provisions for more English classes for non-English speakers. This can be paid for with a fraction of the money saved by ending the funding of multilingual government policies.**

**I support passage of an 'Official Language Act' designating English as the official language of the United States. The United States shall, in all instances, restrict itself to the English language. Citizenship shall not be granted to anyone that is not at least marginally proficient in speaking, reading and understanding the English language, the U.S. Constitution and our national history.**

**Theodore Roosevelt said in 1907: "In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American...There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag... We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language... And we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people."**

**This need for this type of bill is urgent. The number of U.S. residents who speak English "not well" or "not at all" grew by 65 percent between the 1990 census and the 2000 census. More than four out of five likely voters (84%) agree English should be the official language, and 29 states have passed official English. But federal policies, never approved by Congress or the voters, prevent these laws from being meaningfully implemented. This type of legislation will correct this. It affirms that no one has an entitlement to government services in other languages, unless expressly established by law. The bill also repeals bilingual ballots, and requires naturalization (citizenship) ceremonies be conducted in English. Once and for all, it would make English the official language of our government.**

**For more information about John W. Wallace, or to find out about his positions on other issues, please go to: [www.TeaPartyRep.com](http://www.TeaPartyRep.com)**