The Suppression of a Native Tongue

English as an Official Language

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Introduction

- U.S. English Inc is an interest group founded in 1983 by the late California Senator S.I. Hayakawa. It is an interest group consisting of lobbyists and government officials who are pushing to make English the official language of the U.S.
- Their goal is to achieve this on a federal level, and there are now currently 31 States that have adapted English as their official language.

Bills

- H.R. 123: Known as the Emerson English Language Empowerment Act of 1996. Senate failed to act on it. Purpose was to make English the official language of government.

Supporters of US English

They claim that it promotes “national cohesiveness” because this country is majority immigrant. According to the house majority “the bill is meant to encourage non-English speakers to learn English.”

Map of the US English movement

Major Criticisms

- The US English group believes that by passing the bills in federal government it will motivate non-English speakers to learn English with out providing facilities and programs to fulfill its purpose.
- Viewed as an attack against immigration and bilingualism.

Cases against US-English movement

Yniguez v Arizonians for official English
1. Malpractice agent
2. Declared moot by the Supreme Court

Meyer v Nebraska 1923
1. Teacher who used German to teach
2. The Supreme Court went in favor of Meyer.

Bartels v Iowa
1. Similar to Meyer v. Nebraska
2. Also found unconstitutional.

Sources