

June 5, 2007

Oppose Inhofe “English-Only” Amendment

Dear Senator:

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to strongly urge you to oppose the Inhofe “English-only” amendment to the immigration reform bill currently under consideration in the Senate. The Inhofe Amendment, which states English is the national language of the United States, is an overbroad proposal that could restrict the ability of the federal government to communicate effectively with citizens, newcomers, and visitors. In the process, the Inhofe Amendment severely jeopardizes the health and safety of all Americans and impairs national security.

There is no question that English is the common language of this nation; in fact, there is already language in the immigration reform bill which declares that English is “the common language of the United States.” Senator Inhofe’s amendment is an unnecessary attack on the government’s ability to provide effective access to critical information and services.

Recent studies show that the demand for English instruction far exceeds the supply. The real issue is that there is a lack of resources to provide sufficient classes for those seeking to take them. Immigrants want to learn English because they know it is their best path to jobs that will provide greater economic security for their families. This amendment does nothing to address that.

The Inhofe amendment undermines the health and safety of all Americans by undercutting federal, state, and local government’s capacity to provide vital information and services to immigrants and Americans who are speakers of other languages. The Amendment could make it more difficult for agencies like FEMA and Centers for Disease Control to respond to a flu pandemic, another Katrina disaster, or another terrorist attack. If some portion of the community does not receive information that it can understand about immunizations or other health threats, the entire public is at risk.

It seeks to undermine an Executive Order, which clarifies the federal government’s role in providing meaningful access according to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting discrimination based on race and national origin. This Executive Order has been faithfully carried out by President George Bush.

The Inhofe Amendment divides rather than unites our nation. I strongly urge you to vote NO on the Inhofe Amendment.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

American Immigration Lawyers Association
American Association of Jews from the Former USSR
American Friends Service Committee
Asian American Justice Center
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance
Association of Asian Pacific Health Organizations
Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now
Boat People SOS, Inc.
The Coalition on Human Needs
Families USA
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Hmong National Development
Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society
Japanese American Citizens League
League of United Latin American Citizens
Legal Momentum
Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Sheperd
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Development
National Council of La Raza
National Education Association
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Immigration Law Center
National Korean America Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC)
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
National Organization for Women
Organization of Chinese Americans
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow

Local Organizations

Asian American Institute (IL)
Asian American LEAD (MD)
Asian Americans for Equality (NY)
Asian Law Alliance (CA)
Asian Law Caucus (CA)
Asian Pacific American Legal Center (CA)

Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (DC)
Alabama Latin American Association (AL)
African Resource Center (DC)
American University of Law – International Human Rights Clinic (DC)
Bread for the City (DC)
The Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law (NY)
Carecen (DC)
Center for Civil Justice (MI)
Center for Medicare Advocacy, Inc. (DC)
Centro Nia (DC)
Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (NY)
Coalition for New South Carolinians (SC)
Columbia Heights Shaw Family Support Collaborative (DC)
Commission on the Public's Health System (NY)
Community Justice Project (PA)
DC Employment Justice Center (DC)
DC Learns (DC)
Coalicion de Lideres Latinos (GA)
El Centro, Inc. (KS)
Empire Justice Center (NY)
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ME)
Immigrant Legal Resource Center (CA)
Juvenile Justice Project of Louisiana (LA)
Jewish Community Action (MN)
Korean American Resource and Cultural Center (IL)
Korean Resource Center (CA)
La Fe Policy and Advocacy Center (TX)
Latin American Community Center (DE)
Latin American Coalition (NC)
Latino Federation of Greater Washington (DC)
La Clinica Del Pueblo (DC)
The Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia (DC)
Life Skills Center (DC)
Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care (DC)
Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MA)
Montana Human Rights Network (MT)
Multicultural Community Service (DC)
Na Loio - Immigrant Rights & Public Interest Legal Center (HI)
Neighbors Consejo (DC)
New York Immigration Coalition (NY)
Rockland Immigration Coalition (NY)
Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TN)
United Dubuque Immigrant Alliance (IA)
US Citizens for United Families (TX)
Vietnamese American Community Service Center (DC)
Virginia Justice Center for Farm and Immigrant Workers (VA)

Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs (DC)
YKASEC- Empowering the Korean American Community (NY)