
League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by Jay Edgar - 2008/09/09 09:37

This thread discusses the Content article: League of Women Voters Questionnaire

In addition we need to make it a federal law that ENGLISH will be the official language.

Why? If they want to do business in Cajun in Louisiana, German in PA, Hawaiian in Hawaii, Spanish in Puerto Rico, Samoan in American Samoa, Chinese in Chinatown, or Navajo (or anyone of the other Native American languages) why is that any business of the United States government? This is an unwarranted expansion of the role of the fed.

Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by big eddie - 2008/09/15 15:52

If any of these groups want government forms and other documents in their own language they should be willing to pay for them with their own money. It should not be paid for by the rest of us. This is America, they should learn to speak English. We should not cater to them.

Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by Kevin Ferrizzi - 2008/09/15 22:31

I have to admit, the idea struck me as un-libertarian, but just about every bit of information I can gather on it shows that some 80% of Americans are in favor of it. It's a popular message, plain and simple. I read an issue paper from the Cato Institute which quoted empirical evidence that over 90% of immigrants to America speak English only by the 3rd generation. My own family is proof of that. My great grandparents spoke only Italian, my grandfather was bilingual and my mother and her siblings wouldn't know Italian from Japanese. This is taken by Cato to mean that no official language is needed. I have read other studies that claim printing government documents in multiple languages is actually working to prevent the immigrant community from learning English, leading to second and third generation children still speaking with an accent or being bilingual.

Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by Jay Edgar - 2008/09/16 12:31

Does anyone really believe that printing more than one language on a government document accounts for a significant percentage of the federal budget?

If an industry found that their customers wanted interactions in more than one language would they be saving money by demanding that their customers speak a certain language? Or would they be serving their customers needs? Government offices should have the autonomy to serve their customers as each office sees fit.

Is having enclaves of groups that speak their own language really harmful to the US in anyway at all? Is the existence of Chinatown, Polish communities, Hispanic communities, Cajun areas, etc a problem that the Fed should even attempt some sort of social engineering forcing them to assimilate?

I think not and it certainly is not Libertarian to demand assimilation.

How can one believe in the free market, but have an exception for labor? Reason magazine has published some of their most recent addition concerning immigration on the web. See their homepage. We need to make it easier to immigrate to the US legally. Our immigration laws are so complex and restrictive that it encourages illegal immigration.

There is a parallel to our drug laws here. Restrictive laws against something that people desire will be broken. The end result will be chaos. Our drug laws have resulted in an underground (and often violent) drug culture. Our immigration laws have resulted in an underground labor force. This underground labor force will not go away with stronger immigration penalties and laws. Instead more problems will result. We need to simplify immigration. This will make it easier to have secure borders because immigrants will be coming through using legal means instead of sneaking across.

Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by big eddie - 2008/09/16 18:19

It doesnot matter if the cost is only 1 cent the taxpayers should not have to pay it. Do you want to see road signs in chinese in chinese neighborhoods or greek in greek neighborhoods? Should schools teach only in the language of that neighborhood or culture?Since when are libertarians right about everything?I donot need reason magazine to find out what i think.I know this may be hard to imagine but libertarians can be wrong,and non libertarians can be right on occasion.There are many non libertarians who have good ideas and do care about liberty.Libertarians do not have a total lock on liberty.

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Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by wluers - 2008/09/17 08:56

Regarding English as the official language, I think the issue is whether government forms should be in one language, or several languages. The classic example is drivers license tests, which I think in New Jersey there are 40 different iterations.

In terms of what the government's policy should be, I think it should be neutral. The federal government should not interfere in State decisions regarding language. States need to decide what to do based on their own needs. The federal government's policy should be English as the primary language, but with some sort of rule of reason for special circumstances, such as using interpreters in courts.

The free market seems to reward language diversity. Vendors who can communicate in more languages can reach more markets. So, in a Libertarian world, I would expect all those private schools to be teaching French, Spanish, Russian, etc.

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Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by big eddie - 2008/09/21 23:56

Since we are not living in a libertarian world and we are not making decions based on libertarian thought you cannot make that assumption.

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Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by Kevin Ferrizzi - 2008/09/22 13:27

We are not making decisions on libertarian thought, yet, but it is the duty of the Libertarian Party to come up with answers to these questions and put them forth to the citizens. Since we are discussing the matter of English as an official language in the context of a Federal Senate election, I would agree with Walter. Let the Congress pass it but leave final decision to the States. The American people so far have been quite clear on this issue (ask a few yourself) and I feel that any elected official should reflect the will of his constituents. Personally I think the ACLU would eat an official language law alive. By a strict reading of the Constitution, the 1st, 10th, and 14th Amendments could all be used as a potential argument against naming an official language.

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Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by Amani S - 2008/10/04 06:04

I am an American living in Germany.

This question of an official language is an annoying one. What do you mean by an "official language"? Is this for government things or for everyone? The counter point to this is why would you only want English only signs? What is

the profit?

Here in Germany, all signs must be in German. This even in stores. In America, restaurants with menus in only one language, other than English, are considered authentic. Ex. French or Chinese restaurants. And why would you buy at a store in which you could not read the signs.

New York and California are two great examples of multi-language places over the years. America is an immigrant land. These places cater to people who are coming over here. You want to end all those small businesses.

Many places have signs in other languages. Even here in Germany there are bilingual places that have signs in more than one language. (This second language is only spoken by a few thousand people)

People don't want forms and brochures in a second language. Really, sometimes the people who need the service the most need help in another language. You mean you only want to help women who are battered if they speak only English. You don't want the 40+ hour a week legal worker to get his taxes back. Are people exempt from laws if they do not speak English? It can take a year to truly understand a language. Do you not want that person to participate in your society until they can learn your language?

Re:English as the official language

Posted by Jay Edgar - 2008/10/16 20:26

Yikes! Some bonehead at national LP has criticized Biden for voting against expanding the role of the fed by making an official language. God damn the neo-libertarians in the national party!

From the blog Classically Liberal

Some bureaucrat at the Libertarian Party office has put out an email attacking Obama's vice presidential choice, Joe Biden. Of course, Biden is a politician and an advocate of big government, most the time, so there is much to criticize.

What is interesting is that apparently this LP functionary thinks that one reason to attack Biden is that he "voted against making English the official language of the United States." Since when did the LP demand that government impose an "official" language? Is this part of the rebranding of the LP so it can appeal to racists and bigots in the Minutemen? I know the party is rapidly becoming conservative, and throwing out libertarian principles as fast as they can, but this was a new one to me.

Instead of asking government to stay out of people's affairs this is asking them to come into it. There is no need to have the state involved in language at all. Here is what I find hilarious. Half the morons pushing English as the official language are barely literate in it themselves. Go to one of the Right-wing rallies of "good ol' boys" and you will hear them mangling the language in the worst way. These are the types who love words that don't exist -- like "ain't". And they don't use it for effect, they use it all the time. Or they indulge in double negatives such as: "We ain't got to let no Mexicans take our jobs."

If they actually picked up a pen, or a keyboard, their written English would even be worse. But then they don't pick up pens. And the only time they use keyboards is looking up sports results and porn. But apparently this ignorant mass of nationalistic bigots is part of the LP's new target audience. Pity liberty if the Libertarians ever gain power.

A friend has said to me: "Power corrupts. And the Libertarian Party today proves that even the mere whiff of power corrupts."

I just don't fit in the Libertarian Party anymore. See, I'm still a libertarian, though the way the movement is going, I'm not sure why I bother. And I still prefer to sleep on my sheets instead of wearing them.

Now, if English is the "official" language, does this mean we will have a government agency approving words? My take on "official" languages is that they often reflect a nation in decline. The French are particularly rabid about having French as their "official" language. Of course, once that is done then you have to police language along the way lest non-official words start to creep into the culture. The French do that. They ban English words that are adopted or prevent shops from posting signs in any language but French.

Once the language is "official" then the camel's nose pushes further into the tent. So they start making demands on policing language in order to make sure that English is protected. This is the way other countries have gone when they embraced language nationalism.

I just never thought I would see this sort of nonsense proposed by the Libertarian Party. But then the LP has surprised me quite a bit lately. I just wish they'd abolish their dishonest slogan about being "the party of principle." They are the party of second-rate and third-rate politicians who think abandoning principle will give them power. But for what purpose do they seek office? It sure as hell isn't to promote liberty anymore.

I know they protest loudly that they are still advocating freedom. But when pushed they merely compare themselves to the authoritarians they oppose. In the end they think that because they aren't as authoritarian as Obama or McCain they are doing just fine. They still talk about loving liberty all the time. But talk is cheap. And it was Oscar Wilde who warned:

Yet each man kills the thing he loves, By each let this be heard, Some do it with a bitter look, Some with a flattering word, The coward does it with a kiss, The brave man with a sword! Some kill their love when they are young, And some when they are old; Some strangle with the hands of Lust, Some with the hands of Gold: The kindest use a knife, because The dead so soon grow cold.

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Re:League of Women Voters Questionnaire

Posted by Kevin Ferrizzi - 2008/10/16 22:05

This does bring up a few things I hadn't considered. Making English the official language would no doubt set precedent for the government to begin to police how we speak. Very very bad. I think we should come up with a plank in our platform addressing something like this to give future candidates some direction with this issue since it is brought up alot. You would think the 1st Amendment would be enough to convince citizens where to be on this subject, but it seems too many people are willing to disregard the Constitution when it suits them. I never thought I'd say it, but I agree with Biden on this one. I think we need a counter movement to these neo-libertarians. It's time we try to get some more ex-Democrats on our side.

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