

TO: Friends

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SJ: English First responds to the latest White House talking points

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

(Prague, Czech Republic)

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## Immigration Fact Check: Responding To Key Myths

(excerpt)

**MYTH**: The bill ignores the importance of assimilation.

• **White House** **FACT**: An entire subtitle is dedicated to assimilation and outlines several new and expanded assimilation programs, including:

- Expanding the mission of the DHS Office of Citizenship to include civic integration;
- Authorizing \$100 million for the office to carry out its new, broader mission;
- Providing grants to States and localities for integration programs; and
- Directing the Education Department to develop a new English learning program to be made available free over the Internet.

### **Response of English First**

(A) Impoverished migrant farm workers are not well known for either carrying laptop with wi-fi access or PCs with modems. The free Internet program is feel good legislation.

(B) The grant program appears to allot \$2 million per state. However, the bill defines “state” to include: “each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.”

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- **[White House] FACT:** The bill also declares that English is the language of the United States and directs the United States government to preserve and enhance it.

## **Response of English First**

This is a selective quotation from Section 702, lines 27 to 31. Continue reading from the last word in line 31 of the discussion draft to line 39:

31 ... **Nothing** herein shall **diminish** or expand any existing rights under the laws of the United States relative to services or materials provided by the Government of the United States **in any language other than English**. (c) Definition: For the purposes of this section, law is defined as including provisions of the United States Constitution, the United States Code, controlling judicial decisions, regulations, and Presidential Executive Orders [emphasis added].

One “existing right” is conferred by Clinton Executive Order 13166, which requires all recipients of federal funds to provide translations into any language any speaks for free upon demand.

This section of the bill is so poorly drafted that if it passes and later President Bush rescinds E.O. 13166, no one knows what would happen, given (1) this section does not say “current” Executive Orders” (although that is implied); (2) there are no court decisions which create a right to services in another language, but E.O. 13166 claims that right exists, meaning controlling legal authority would be in the eye of the beholder, and (3) the Senate debate last year revolved precisely around whether the Senate would affirm “controlling Executive Orders.”

- **[White House] FACT:** Individuals seeking to maintain their Z status must meet accelerated English requirements.

This legislation requires Z visa holders to pass a modest English test after eight years. This time limit is “accelerated” only in the sense that legal immigrants are not required to ever take the naturalization test, provided they have no interest in obtaining U.S. citizenship.

*--Prepared by English First, June 5, 2007.*