



Joint Statement on the Trump Administration’s Executive Order 14224 Designating English as the Official Language of the United States and Revoking Executive Order 13166

As six of the nation’s leading professional associations for translators and interpreters, we strongly oppose President Trump’s [Executive Order 14224](#) issued on March 1. The [executive order designates English as the official language](#) of the United States and revokes [Executive Order 13166](#), issued in 2000, which was instrumental in improving access to federal, state and local programs and services for people with limited English proficiency, as protected under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

We encompass a collective body of 27,800 professionals who provide translation and interpretation services in every corner of American society, from the classroom to the courtroom and everywhere in between. Translators and interpreters have been bridging language gaps even since [before the United States was founded](#), and we believe that respecting language diversity and breaking down barriers through translation and interpreting services fosters unity across the nation. President Trump’s executive order does the opposite.

Overview

Approximately 25.7 million, or 8%, of U.S. residents have limited English proficiency. More than 68 million, or 20%, use a language other than English at home. More than 350 languages are spoken and signed in American homes today. This linguistic diversity is not new—it reflects the dozens of indigenous languages and our nation’s immigrant heritage and multicultural and multilingual composition since its founding.

Rather than promoting unity, this executive order reinforces division and overlooks the United States’ multicultural heritage. Throughout U.S. history, English-only policies have often limited linguistic diversity, making it harder for some communities to fully participate in society. For over two centuries, the United States has thrived without a federally mandated official language.

Revoking Executive Order 13166 undermines essential protections and is a major step backward for civil rights in the United States. By establishing clear standards and expectations for language assistance, Executive Order 13166 helped ensure that vital information about healthcare, education, emergency services, and legal rights reached vulnerable populations who might otherwise have been excluded. The order’s guidance framework also provided federal funding recipients with practical tools to meet their civil rights obligations under Title VI,

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resulting in more consistent implementation of language access services across diverse institutions like hospitals, schools, and social service agencies.

People with limited English proficiency (LEP) are essential workers, small business owners, entrepreneurs, taxpayers, and community members who contribute significantly to American society. And while this executive order does not overturn existing laws that address language access, it has the potential to exacerbate language barriers, depriving LEP individuals of their federally protected right to meaningfully access vital services, understand their rights, and participate fully in civic life.

Health Care

When it comes to healthcare, language access is enshrined in law. Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin. All healthcare providers that receive federal financial assistance, for example by participating in Medicare or Medicaid, must provide language assistance services for free upon request.

LEP patients face increased risks of medical errors, misdiagnosis, and poorer health outcomes if adequate language services are unavailable. Veronica Mireles experienced this firsthand when [a language barrier led to a mistaken diagnosis for her son, delayed care, and a ruptured appendix requiring emergency surgery](#). Unaware of her right to an interpreter, she struggled to communicate and experienced discrimination. No parent should face such barriers when seeking medical care for their child.

The revocation of executive order 13166, along with the apparent withdrawal of the language access policy of the US Department of Health and Human Services, will create confusion that could discourage providers from offering, and LEP individuals from requesting, language services. This will make these problems worse, increase healthcare costs, and put more strain on our medical system.

Legal System

The potential scaling back of language services as a result of revoking Executive Order 13166 will have profound implications on the administration of justice for people with limited English proficiency in the United States. The right to due process is a cornerstone of our legal system, and language barriers directly undermine this fundamental right. When LEP individuals cannot understand legal proceedings, court documents, or communications with law enforcement, they are effectively denied equal justice under the law and the courts are hamstrung and unable to deliver effective services to this subset of the people they serve.

Miguel Roman, not fluent in English, was interrogated mostly in English despite receiving his Miranda rights in Spanish. His [inconsistent statements were used to convict him, leading to 20 years in prison](#) before DNA evidence proved his innocence. He was freed in 2008 and exonerated in 2009, highlighting the devastating consequences of inadequate language access in legal proceedings.

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Leading legal organizations including the American Bar Association, Conference of Chief Justices, and National Center for State Courts have consistently found that comprehensive language services enhance judicial efficiency, accuracy, and fairness—essential values for the administration of justice that transcend political differences about language policy.

Education

[Approximately 5 million children](#) attending American schools today live in LEP households. Research has documented that parental involvement in children’s primary and secondary schooling is strongly linked to academic success. If schools and teachers are unable to communicate effectively with parents, their children’s education will be negatively impacted, widening achievement gaps and leaving parents unable to advocate for their children.

[When Wendy Rodas sought help for her daughter’s bullying](#), technical issues with the school’s interpretation service nearly derailed the meeting. Without bilingual advocates, communication would have failed entirely. Frustrated by unreliable school-provided interpretation, she often had to rely on her older son to navigate important conversations about her children’s education. No parent should face such barriers when trying to support their child’s well-being and success in school. The potential long-term economic and social consequences of these gaps are well known: lower graduation rates, limited access to higher education, and fewer job opportunities, leading to a less qualified workforce. Ensuring students can achieve educational and career success ultimately contributes to a more self-sufficient workforce and a stronger economy.

Economy

Whether they have moved here for a better life or have lived here their entire lives, people with limited English proficiency are pillars of the U.S. economy. Countless LEP entrepreneurs create jobs and stimulate local economies by opening businesses with the help of language access that enables them to understand regulatory requirements, navigate business licensing processes, hire employees, and file their taxes. Revoking Executive Order 13166 risks making all of these things harder, creating unnecessary barriers to economic growth and innovation at every level.

Furthermore, LEP workers are a huge part of the American workforce. DS Smith, a successful Indiana business, [has hired three full-time interpreters](#) to provide language access to LEP workers, allowing their plant to hire workers in half the time by providing access to a broader applicant pool and thus increase production by 300% in three years. Investing in language access strengthens businesses, drives economic growth, and reinforces America’s competitive edge in global commerce.

The economic benefits of full civic participation by all residents—including those with limited English proficiency—far outweigh the costs of providing translation and interpretation services. Language access is not merely a social service expense, but an investment in economic integration and growth.

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Conclusion and Call to Action

Our nation's strength has always been our ability to embrace diversity while fostering unity, and language policy should reflect this fundamental American principle. Given the overwhelming and resounding benefits of language access in the United States, we strongly oppose the designation of English as the official language and the weakening of existing language access protections. We call on the Trump administration to rescind this executive order and to reaffirm Executive Order 13166 and strengthen its implementation across federal agencies and state and local government offices.

The administration should instead create policies that promote English learning while maintaining the vital, existing, and long-standing accommodations for linguistic minorities in health care, education, civil services, emergency services, administration of justice, and other essential areas. By ensuring that all residents can fully participate in American society - regardless of their English proficiency - we will honor our democratic values and create opportunities for everyone to contribute to our shared future.

While the requirement to provide language services remains in place through legislative and judicial precedent, the revocation of Executive Order 13166 undermines decades of progress in ensuring that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) can access essential services - especially in health care, education, and the legal system where miscommunication can have dire consequences.

Language access may be under threat, but the fight isn't over. Now is the time to act. As interpreters (and members of our respective communities) we must:

- ✓ Educate LEP individuals about their rights under Title VI and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.
- ✓ Support providers in maintaining language access services despite the chilling effect of this executive order.
- ✓ Support policies that expand language access and speak out against efforts to weaken it.

The law still requires meaningful access, but enforcement depends on our collective voice. Stay informed, speak out, and stand up for language justice.

American Translators Association
American Association of Interpreters and Translators in Education
Association of Language Companies
Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters
National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators
Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf