

Idaho Senate passes official English bill

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Chamber becomes third this year to approve common language legislation

WASHINGTON - The Idaho Senate voted 20- 15 yesterday to make English the official language of Idaho, demonstrating the importance of a common bond in an increasingly diverse state. Introduced by Sen. Mel Richardson, S.B. 1172 would require that most government business be done in English, with common sense exceptions in areas such as health care and judicial proceedings. If the measure passes the House of Representatives and is signed into law by Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter, Idaho would become the 29th state to enact official English legislation.

"I want to thank Senator Richardson and his colleagues in the Senate for their responsiveness to the people of Idaho," said Mauro E. Mujica, Chairman of the Board of U.S. English, Inc. "Idahoans understand that while we never wish for English to be our only language, making it our official language is key to the continued unity and success of our nation. By promoting the common bond of English, we can ensure that everyone has an equal chance to go as far as their dreams can take them."

With the passage of S.B. 1172, Idaho becomes the third state this year to have official English legislation pass through one chamber of the legislature. Last month, the Kansas House of Representatives approved an official English measure, while the Missouri House of Representatives approved legislation to strengthen the state's official English law. In addition to Idaho, Kansas, and Missouri, 15 other states have seen official English measures introduced, including Texas, Washington, Oregon and Michigan.

A recent Mason-Dixon poll of Idaho voters found that 77 percent support making English the official language of the state, with 62 percent strongly supporting the measure. The poll of 625 voters was conducted Feb. 7-9, 2007 and has a margin of error of plus or minus four percent.

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