California and the English Wars

The English Wars began twenty-five years ago.

On a May 1997 morning I stood in the Las Familias del Pueblo daycare center in downtown Los Angeles and announced that I had filed an initiative to dismantle California’s decades-old system of “bilingual education” for Latino immigrant children, a curriculum that amounted to Spanish-almost-only instruction. Although the press conference was quite well-attended, including seven television cameras, most media outlets were probably drawn more by the scent of extreme political controversy with a sharp ethnic tinge than from any realistic expectations that a program so enormous and so deeply entrenched was facing any serious threat to its survival.

Over the next six years, the “English” issue roiled the political landscape in California and several other states, while also emerging upon the national stage. Thousands of news stories[1] reported the battles that resulted, and these regularly reached the headlines of our major newspapers. The lives and futures of many millions of immigrant students were drastically transformed by the results of that educational struggle, and the subsequent trajectory of our entire nation may have been changed.

And the ultimate outcome of that long and bitter conflict? Just consider the blank stares of so many current readers of these sentences. I suspect that many younger Americans are today only very vaguely familiar with the term “bilingual education,” and in their traditional form the
programs themselves seem to have vanished almost as thoroughly as did the name that was once given them. As far back as a dozen years ago, veteran teachers would occasionally mention to me that when they described their old instructional method to new hires at their school, the latter were totally disbelieving, convinced that they were being made the butt of some practical joke. America has changed.

I had selected *Las Familias* as the site of my 1997 announcement for more than merely symbolic reasons. For over a dozen years that somewhat shabby facility located near LA’s Skid Row had cared for the young children of impoverished immigrant sweatshop workers in the nearby Garment District, but the previous year it had been the center of a protest that ultimately changed the course of American society.

The notion of teaching young Latino children in Spanish rather than in English when they entered school had never made any sense to me when I’d first heard of it while in junior high or high school, and all of my friends had been just as skeptical. According to the occasional news stories, the programs seemed a total failure, and for decades denunciations of bilingual education had been a regular talking-point among conservative Republicans, with President Ronald Reagan joining in the public attacks. Such attitudes were hardly confined to one side of the ideological aisle and Albert Shanker, the legendary founder of the modern teachers’ union movement, had become one of the most trenchant foes. Yet despite all that endless criticism and the bitter opposition of such powerful figures, the programs themselves had survived unscathed and instead greatly expanded over thirty years, seeming to demonstrate the adage that although political leaders may come and go, governmental programs themselves are immortal.

But then in 1996 I’d read a series of articles in the *Los Angeles Times* that greatly surprised me. A group of poor Latino garment workers in Downtown Los Angeles had become so outraged at the refusal of their local Ninth Street elementary school to teach their children English that they had organized a public boycott. I’d long regarded bilingual education as an apparent failure, but when parents had to carry picket signs outside their school because it refused to allow their children to learn English, the system seemed to have crossed over into total insanity. *Las Familias* had been the organizing center of that successful protest, with the parents assisted by Alice Callaghan, the media-savvy immigrant-rights activist and leftist Episcopal nun who ran it.
As I began carefully investigating the issue, I gradually discovered that “bilingual education” was a program seemingly plucked straight from the pages of *Alice in Wonderland*, with the facts being so bizarre that neither I nor almost anyone else who initially encountered them could possibly believe that they were real.

- 1.3 million California public school students, a quarter of the entire total, were classified as not knowing English, and of these, each year only 5% or 6% successfully learned English. According to the official government statistics, almost 95% of all the students who started a school year not knowing English were still classified as not having learned the language by the end of that year.
- Over half of all the students who didn’t know English were born in America, and most of the rest came here when they were very young. So the overwhelming majority of the students not knowing English had entered American public schools at the age of 5 or 6.
- One reason so many Latino students failed to learn English was that in the early grades a large majority were enrolled in so-called “bilingual” programs, which actually amounted to Spanish-almost-only instruction, often providing just thirty minutes a day of English and five hours and thirty minutes of Spanish.
- Another major problem was the absurdly perverse incentive structure, under which schools were paid more money for every child who failed to learn English and financially penalized for those who did. This encouraged schools either not to teach their students English or pretend that they hadn’t learned it.
- The leading academic theorists behind bilingual education insisted that the older you were, the easier it was to learn another language. According to them, adults learned new languages
much quicker and easier than teenagers, and teenagers much easier than young children.

- The official dogma behind bilingual education held that a young immigrant child required five to seven years to learn English, or perhaps even ten years according to some cutting-edge researchers. So a child who began learning English in kindergarten might finally have mastered the language by junior high or high school.

Bilingual education had originally been established in the late 1960s as an element of Latino empowerment and ethnic activism, then gradually been absorbed into the framework of avant-garde pedagogy, eventually becoming closely associated with Whole Language reading, Fuzzy Math, and other theoretical doctrines much beloved by the academic theorists who staffed our Schools of Education. Over the years, several books by educators and political activists such as Rosalie Pedalino Porter, Linda Chavez, and Christine Rossell had described the origins, history, and obvious failure of such programs, and I read all of these works once I began my investigation.

During the course of my campaign, I gradually discovered that virtually none of the political supporters of bilingual programs were actually aware of the theoretical basis of the system that they were defending, and when those tenets were explained to them, they would usually react with disbelief or sometimes even say “But that’s crazy!”

Although California schools constituted a veritable Tower of Babel, with up to 140 different languages being spoken, only one language was actually at issue. Some 80% of the state’s Limited English students came from Spanish-speaking backgrounds, with Vietnamese and Chinese being the next most widespread at 1-2% each. Under the existing pedagogical framework, “bilingual” classes meant Spanish-language instruction for Latino students, but English-language instruction for all other immigrant groups, a contradictory nomenclature as irrational as every other aspect of the system.

By a wide margin, California was America’s largest state, nearly as populous as Texas and New York combined, and had also traditionally been among our whitest, as exemplified by the Leave it to Beaver suburbs of the 1950s. But beginning in the 1970s, massive waves of immigration, both legal and illegal, had drastically changed the state’s demography, so that by the early 1990s whites had suddenly become a minority, and even a small and shrinking minority in the urban school systems.

Hispanics, most of them impoverished recent arrivals, had reached some 30% of the total population and seemed likely to outnumber whites within another decade or two. Such rapid demographic change had sparked a couple of
exceptionally bitter and divisive racially-charged initiative campaigns, Prop. 187 (Illegal Immigration) and Prop. 209 (Affirmative Action) in the 1994 and 1996 election cycles respectively, which became crude tests of political strength between the state’s long-dominant Anglos and its minority groups, especially the rising population of Latinos.

Both these measures had won by wide or even landslide majorities, but they had created bitter racial strains between whites and non-whites in the state’s social fabric. There seemed a serious risk that California would become a sharply-divided society fractured along ethnic lines, a recipe for potential future disaster.

Although our racially-obsessed intelligentsia seemingly regards differences in ancestry as the most serious in any society, I do not believe this is correct. From my historical reading, I think that divisions based upon language differences have usually been far more severe and more likely to produce long-term political conflict or even violence. And our disastrously misguided educational policies now seemed to be creating exactly this sort of permanent linguistic chasm in California, transforming it into a state split between English speakers and Spanish speakers.

Some popular concerns were greatly exaggerated. Spanish-language instruction or not, the overwhelming presence of English in the larger society and media ensured that all students eventually learned that language even if the schools often failed to teach it to them. But large numbers of Latino students were given little exposure to written English until the age of nine or ten, so that they might eventually leave high school with weak English literacy skills, having little chance of attending college or getting a good job. The future of an entire generation of immigrant schoolchildren was being destroyed, laying the basis for disastrous political and social trends in California’s future.

In 1999, I published a cover-story[2] in Commentary providing a detailed discussion of the racially-charged political campaigns that had swept across California during the 1990s, and this narrative included a lengthy account of the strategy and course of my own successful “English” campaign, Proposition 227:

Ending this failed and legally dubious program, which was now even forcing some parents to picket their own children’s schools, seemed the ideal target of a voter initiative, and I decided to make such an effort. In broad terms, my goal was to provide for the assimilationist approach to American ethnic diversity the same opportunity to demonstrate its appeal and popular support that Proposition 187 had provided, disastrously, for ethnic nationalists on all sides.

Nothing could be more obvious than that immigrants themselves assigned enormous importance to learning English and to ensuring that their children learned English. Yet because of bilingual education, the completely opposite impression had been created, namely, that immigrants were ardently demanding that America’s public schools help maintain their family’s native language and culture. If executed properly, I believed, a campaign to eliminate these programs
could attract substantial, perhaps overwhelming, support from immigrants themselves, thereby helping to puncture the mistaken anxieties of California’s white middle class.

But I also recognized that in many respects the political climate was extraordinarily inopportune for such an effort. The ethnic wounds inflicted by 187 had been reopened by the destructive handling of 209, and for a Republican like myself to jump in with a proposal to dismantle the bilingual cornerstone of Latino public education was to risk a terrible explosion. In order to mitigate the risk, it was absolutely crucial that the ballot measure be properly perceived as being both pro-immigrant and politically nonpartisan.

With regard to the former, my own pro-immigrant credentials provided some credibility, but not enough. So I began recruiting a cadre of key supporters: Alice Callaghan, with decades of unswerving left-wing activism on behalf of immigrants and their children; Gloria Matta Tuchman, a Latina and California’s most prominent anti-bilingual activist; and Jaime Escalante, of Stand and Deliver fame, perhaps America’s most renowned public-school teacher and himself a Latino immigrant long opposed to bilingual programs.

But no less crucial was to avoid the deadly embrace of California’s numerous anti-immigrant activists, who were likely to jump immediately aboard such a campaign. Since their touchstone had become the elimination of public spending on immigrants, I drafted my own “English for the Children” measure to save no money but rather to appropriate an additional, if rather modest, $50 million a year for English-literacy programs aimed at adult immigrants. The maneuver succeeded, provoking the strong opposition of 187 activists to our entire initiative.

THIS LEFT the various political establishments. For different reasons, both leading Latino and leading Republican figures maintained a stunned silence throughout most of the campaign. My meetings with the former were cordial; many Latino leaders seemed privately as skeptical of bilingual programs as I, but concerns about a revolt by their activist base prevented them from considering an endorsement, even after public polls consistently showed Latino support for the measure running in the 70- to 80-percent range. As for Republican leaders, they were terrified by the prospect of a minority-voter backlash of the sort their own ham-fisted campaign for 209 had provoked; despite nearly 90-percent Republican support in polls, they, too, mostly distanced themselves from the measure.

Teachers’ unions were similarly conflicted. The late Albert Shanker, founder of the American Federation of Teachers, had for years been among the most vocal national critics of bilingual programs, but his successors had generally made their peace with the program. Most rank-and-file teachers, however, continued to view the system as a scandalous failure, and resented the extra pay and perks that went to bilingual instructors. In October 1997, over the strong opposition of union leadership, a grassroots referendum campaign in the gigantic Los Angeles local
garnered 48 percent of the vote for a proposal making support for Proposition 227 official union policy.

All these splits, so surprising to journalists, were extremely helpful to our campaign. When Proposition 227 first appeared on the scene, it seemed almost certain to be perceived as “Son of Proposition 187”—another test of raw political power between California whites and Latinos. Instead, the story we emphasized was one that pitted the common sense of ordinary people—white and Latino, Democrat and Republican—against the timid political elites of all these groups, unwilling to challenge the special interests that benefited from a failed system. Our message to the media was populism without xenophobia, and it resonated widely. Every poll or news story highlighting the widespread Latino dislike of bilingual programs helped reassure moderate and liberal whites that our measure was not anti-minority, while simultaneously persuading conservatives that Latinos and other immigrants shared their own basic values and assimilationist goals.

But there was also a countercampaign, which in resources and funding could hardly have been more dissimilar to our own. Our statewide effort consisted of just three full-time workers, myself included, together with a handful of volunteers whose main role was to participate in public debates and respond to media inquiries. By contrast, “No on 227” was a traditional, well-funded operation led by ace Democratic political consultant Richie Ross and a veteran campaign staff, backed by a field operation of thousands of local activists. It counted the public support of President Clinton, the chairmen of both the state Republican and Democratic parties, all four candidates for governor, every educational organization, every public and private union, and nearly every newspaper. Our opposition was to spend millions on a coordinated barrage of radio, television, and print advertisements; our own campaign was forced to rely almost entirely upon stories in the free media.

Still, despite this monumental imbalance, our foes faced challenges of their own. From the start, public opinion had overwhelmingly and consistently favored “English for the Children” across all ethnic and ideological lines. Although “No on 227” boasted the support of a coalition of pro-bilingual partners, any direct defense of bilingual education was out of the question: nearly everyone knew that the existing system was a failure. No more feasible, given the pro-immigrant credentials of Proposition 227’s main backers and strong immigrant support in the polls, was any attack on the measure as mean-spirited or 187-like. Indeed, such a tactic, by creating an ethnic divide over the measure, might actually backfire by solidifying white support for it.

THE ULTIMATE strategy chosen by the anti-Proposition 227 forces was breathtakingly cynical. This coalition of Latino activists, Democratic operatives, and educational organizations attempted, 187-style, to provoke a white taxpayer backlash by portraying the measure as a huge government “giveaway” to immigrants because of the extra money earmarked to assist adults in learning English. (The entire sum of $50 million amounted to an annual $1.50 per
Simultaneously, a completely different advertising message, aimed at California’s Latino audience, claimed that the problems with bilingual programs had recently been fixed and that Proposition 227 would actually prevent children from learning English in school.

These nakedly dishonest tactics shredded the credibility of the anti-227 campaign, which received a further blow when its major financial backer was discovered to be A. Jerrold Perenchio, a Republican billionaire and close ally of Governor Wilson. Not himself Latino or Spanish-speaking, Perenchio derived his fortune from his ownership of Univision, the Spanish-language television network, and thus had an obvious economic motive in preventing Latino children from learning English in school. Not only did Univision blanket California with anti-227 “advertorials,” broadcast free of charge, but the leading Democratic and Republican candidates for governor counted Perenchio as their largest financial donor, and all of them starred in Perenchio-funded anti-227 commercials.

When voting day finally arrived, Proposition 227 passed in a landslide, gaining 61 percent of the vote across ethnic and ideological lines. True, the “No” advertising campaign, which outspent our “Yes” campaign by about 25 to 1, took its toll, reducing by over a third the 62-percent Latino support the initiative had enjoyed before the start of the television barrage. But since advertising campaigns merely rent support rather than buy it, Latino backing for Proposition 227 in post-election polls soon returned to its earlier levels. More importantly, the actual dismantling of bilingual-education programs in the wake of 227 proceeded with minimal Latino opposition anywhere in California.

Under the measure, parents who wish to place or keep their children in a bilingual program can apply for a waiver, but few have done so. Within months of the vote, the number of students in bilingual education had fallen to about a tenth of its previous levels, and numerous follow-up stories in the press have featured glowing accounts of parents thrilled that schools are finally teaching their children to read, write, and speak English. There have been almost no signs of the immigrant unhappiness or resistance to English-language classrooms that had been confidently predicted by ethnic activists and anti-immigrant ideologues alike. Proposition 227 had tested the case for a return to assimilationist policies in public education and had proved it both popular and workable.

- California and the End of White America[3]

Even after a quarter-century, I still recall some of the memorable vignettes from that first California campaign.
For years I had been moving in conservative policy circles, and although those friends commended me on my new project, they believed that I faced insurmountable odds. They warned me that the powerful teachers’ unions would fight tooth-and-nail to protect their bilingual programs, as would the Latino political leaders, who obviously embraced the ethnic-separatist agenda promoted by Spanish-language instruction. I was very skeptical about both of these points, and several ironic early encounters soon convinced me that my analysis had been correct.

Not long after my campaign first began to get media coverage, the top leaders of California’s largest teachers’ union invited me to lunch, and their attitude was quite friendly. They angrily complained about the disastrous nature of bilingual programs, saying that nearly all their teachers hated the system, and explaining that their powerful union had been trying for many years to get rid of it but with absolutely no success. So although they wished me the best of luck in my quixotic political crusade, they felt sure that I would need it, since bilingual education was invincible and my goal completely hopeless.

A couple of weeks later, I was similarly contacted by the head of the Latino Caucus in the State Legislature, who invited me to Sacramento for a private meeting. A few years earlier, he had shared a podium with me when I was a top featured speaker at California’s largest anti-Prop. 187 rally, so he and his top aides received me in a very friendly manner. As he began examining the text of my initiative, he repeatedly expressed his enthusiasm for many of the provisions, saying that his own legislative caucus had been moving in the same direction but much more slowly.

He offered to arrange a meeting with the full Latino Caucus, and I naively hoped that I might gain their endorsement, but whether because of too much controversy or too little interest, only about one-third of the members bothered attending, and most scarcely said a word. The main exception was a certain Diane Martinez, herself a third-generation American and supposedly a former bilingual education teacher, regularly described as the most obstreperous and widely disliked member of the Legislature, sometimes on the short end of 119-to-1 votes. As I began making my presentation, she quickly jumped in, and probably spoke as much as everyone else in the room combined, fiercely defending the bilingual programs against my criticism.

At one point, I began suggesting that many Latinos didn’t like bilingual education, and she immediately interrupted and cut me off. “I know that!” she said, “Every election I walk door-to-door in my district, and everyone is always complaining to me about the bilingual programs. They all say that the system is no good, the classes don’t work, and their children aren’t learning any English. But they’re all stupid, ignorant immigrant parents, who don’t know anything about education. I’ve talked with the academic experts, and all the experts agree that the bilingual programs are successful.” At her insulting characterization of her own Latino immigrant constituents, some of the other members of the Latino Caucus seemed to shrink down in their chairs in embarrassment, but none of them dared to challenge her harangue, and the meeting eventually ended without any positive results, let alone the endorsement I had foolishly been seeking.

Both these examples fully supported my impression of the underlying political dynamics. Although the bilingual advocates were relatively few in number, they were fiercely committed
to their programs and intensely focused upon that sole, overriding issue, expressing the sort of fanaticism that persuaded far larger organizations to steer clear of any direct conflict.

California had a population of around 30 million and probably no more than a few thousand hard-core bilingual supporters if even that, but the intensity of their lobbying had blocked any change. According to all the public polls, our initiative possessed absolutely overwhelming popular support, but anyone who attended the scores of public debates during our campaign would have had the impression that opposition was running at 95% based upon the sentiments of the audiences. For decades, a tiny but extremely vocal minority had successfully trumped the views of a huge but apathetic majority, whether among Latinos, teachers, or the general public.

Many political campaigns amount to short-term quasi-business enterprises, focused heavily upon raising money for paid advertising, which generates the lucrative commissions for the political consultants that control the operation. However, I was acting as my own unpaid consultant, and my overriding goal was shaping the media coverage that would determine the broader impact of such a racially-charged and potentially explosive issue.

Mainstream journalists, then as now, heavily leaned left on racial and cultural issues, and those covering the educational beat were naturally influenced by the educational establishment that had spent decades administering these bilingual programs. Moreover, the Schools of Education were fervent supporters of the system, lending their academic credibility to the programs. For these reasons, we obviously began with the media overwhelmingly aligned against us.

But as the individual journalists gradually became more familiar with the issue and heard our side of the story, their perspectives usually changed. They investigated the facts and became aware of the actual reality of the bizarre educational programs that for a full generation had been so severely miseducating Latino immigrant students. Their initial suspicions towards our initiative campaign soon dissipated and they became increasingly friendly, to such an extent that one of our main activities was merely redistributing mainstream news coverage. This media reaction crossed all ideological lines and astounded my disbelieving conservative friends.

One of the earliest examples of this reaction came in a piece by an eager young journalist named Gregory Rodriguez that appeared[5] in the leftist-alternative LA Weekly, and emphasized the ironies of the campaign:

> When “English for the Children” first surfaced, this proposed ballot initiative against bilingual education looked like the logical political descendant of California’s recent campaigns against undocumented immigrants and affirmative action. Bilingual education would be the latest target for the state’s disproportionately large and cranky Anglo electorate. Presumably, much of the white electorate, led by conservatives and anti-immigrant activists, would line up to support the initiative, while liberals and Latinos would amass forces on the other side.
But so far, an entirely different political dynamic has emerged, according to political consultants and senior officials from both major parties. Neither the Latino political leadership nor that of the state Republican Party wants anything to do with this initiative. Many Republicans are reluctant to be identified with an issue that could expose them to further charges of being immigrant bashers or anti-Latino. The Latino political establishment, on the other hand, is reluctant to defend bilingual education, a program whose success many privately question. Nor do some want to condemn openly an initiative sponsored by Ron Unz, one of the rare Republicans who have stood strong with immigrants in the past.

Six months later, Rodriguez published a much longer and more extensive piece[6] covering the same ground in *The Nation*, America’s flagship left-liberal opinion magazine, and within a few years he had established himself as one of our most insightful and sophisticated writers on issues of race and ethnicity, authoring a series of long pieces[7] for the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

In mid-October, we had gotten a lucky break as the *Los Angeles Times* released the results of their statewide poll[8] on our measure, indicating absolutely overwhelming support across ideological and ethnic lines for our proposal that all public school instruction be conducted in English, with the 84% backing by Latinos being even greater than the 80% support among Anglos. During the eight months prior to Election Day, a dozen other statewide polls[9] by third-party organizations all continued to show massive support for “English in the Schools.” And around the same time as that first poll, I had managed to recruit renowned Calculus teacher Jaime Escalante of *Stand and Deliver* fame to join our campaign as Honorary Chairman, providing a further boost.

Our efforts began attracting some favorable national attention in the elite media, including early coverage in the *New York Times*[10] and the *Economist*[11], as well as in the *Los Angeles Times*, which in those days still ranked as one of America’s most influential newspapers.

In January 1998, *Reason* magazine published an outstanding 8,500 word cover story[12] on bilingual education, one of the very first times a national audience had been exposed to the utterly bizarre aspects of that long-standing program. Some described this piece as a “category killer” on the topic and we ordered thousands of offprints, which were widely distributed.

Unlike most political campaigns, which amount to uninteresting partisan slugfests relying upon poll-tested slogans and political advertising, the complexities and ironies of the “English” issue were ideal grist for long-form investigative journalism, and a great deal of such written analysis soon appeared, a body of work that steadily reshaped the perspectives of the more thoughtful segments of the reading public. During the twelve months of our campaign, those longstanding programs probably received many, many times more public scrutiny and media coverage than
they had accumulated during the previous thirty years combined, including numerous excellent magazine articles in weeklies and monthlies, as well as thousands of articles[13] in the major daily newspapers.

- **Bilingual Barrio (PDF)[14]** by Glenn Garvin
  *Reason Magazine* • January 1998, Cover Story • 8,500 Words
- **English Spoken Here (PDF)[15]** by David Hill
  *Teacher Magazine* • January 1998 • 4,200 Words
- **English Lessons in California (PDF)[16]** by Gregory Rodriguez
  *The Nation* • April 20, 1998 • 2,400 Words
- **The Case Against Bilingual Education[17]** by Rosalie Pedalino Porter
  *The Atlantic* • May 1998 • 3,300 Words
- **The Making of an Initiative (PDF)[18]** by Michael J. Fitzgerald
  *California Lawyer* • May 1998 • 3,600 Words
- **KrashenBurn (PDF)[19]** by Jill Stewart
  *New Times Los Angeles* • May 28, 1998, Cover Story • 5,600 Words
- **Squeeze Play (PDF)[20]** by Howard Blume and Ben Ehrenreich
  *LA Weekly* • May 29, 1998, Cover Story • 5,400 Words

As already mentioned, most national political observers had initially assumed that this campaign would follow the trajectory of Prop. 187 and Prop. 209, the racially-charged California initiatives of the previous two election cycles, both strongly backed by Republican operatives but later seen as longterm political disasters for the GOP. Despite the initial unpopularity of Affirmative Action, President Bill Clinton had rallied his base by defending those programs, and partly as a consequence won an easy reelection victory in 1996. Therefore, many expected that he would similarly seek to consolidate his Latino support by quickly taking a leading role in defending a threatened social program that had always been identified with that constituency.

In early March 1998, Harvard University’s Institute of Politics organized a public debate on our initiative, inviting me as one of the participants, with the moderator being Prof. Christopher Edley of the Law School, Clinton’s top advisor on racial matters. Just the previous week, that same forum had hosted a bitter, rancorous debate on Affirmative Action[21], and I am sure that Edley had expected the bilingual controversy to play out along similar racially-divisive fault lines.

Instead, he encountered something entirely different. All participants agreed about the tremendous importance of having Latino immigrant children learn English, with the dispute being the pedagogical question of whether this was best accomplished by teaching everything in Spanish, a notion that surely must have puzzled the law professor. Perhaps partly as a consequence of this unexpected turn, President Clinton chose to avoid the issue during nearly the entire campaign, only coming out against our measure shortly before the vote. The introduction and most relevant portions of this important early Harvard debate are hosted on our Youtube channel, while the entire video[22] is also available online.
Comprehensive collections of the major print and television media clips of the California campaign are also available:

- Early California Campaign Media, 1997/1998[23]
- Late California Campaign Media, 1998[24]

**The Aftermath of California’s Proposition 227**

The huge quantity and overwhelmingly favorable skew of mainstream and elite media coverage had crucial consequences for our campaign, far beyond merely stiffening our Yes vote against the opposition’s 25-to-1 advantage in paid advertising. Controversial, racially-charged California initiatives had a long history of winning landslide victories at the polls only to be thrown out by the courts or at least delayed for years by legal challenges, and almost everyone had assumed that our measure would suffer exactly that fate. But the enormously positive atmospherics generated by our excellent media coverage helped ensure that within just a few weeks of our victory, four federal judges had ruled in our favor. Prop. 227 passed in early June and by the beginning of the next school year in early August, California’s thousand-odd school districts had begun changing their language of instruction to English, an outcome that completely astonished nearly all political observers.

Given the magnitude of the change and its speed, the 1998 shift of California public schooling from Spanish to English probably constituted the largest controlled educational experiment in the history of the world, and as the new school year began every newspaper naturally assigned its local reporters to investigate the consequences. The result was an avalanche of stories about the unexpected success of the transformation, with former bilingual teachers shocked at how easily their students were absorbing the new language “like little sponges,” while also describing the tremendous gratitude of their parents.

During our campaign, the evidence of the failure of the bilingual programs had been so manifest that none of our opponents had dared to defend the existing system, instead merely arguing that the sweeping changes we proposed would be even more disastrous and destroy the education of over a million immigrant students. But instead of these predictions of doom, the newspapers began reporting stories of tremendous success.

Indeed, these early results were so favorable that they helped prompt the influential *New Republic* to run a cover story[25] on my California political achievements, which represented the all-time high-water mark of my personal media coverage.
Some school districts including gigantic LA Unified had dragged their heels and resisted the changes, but most seemed to reasonably comply, and after the first year, statewide immigrant test scores showed a very noticeable improvement, giving the lie to the many predictions of disaster. Moreover, a detailed quantitative analysis[26] by the San Jose Mercury News demonstrated a clear pattern of results, with immigrant students in districts that had eliminated their bilingual programs showing much better gains than those districts that had retained them, a contrast that prodded LA and most other holdouts to begin fully implementing the law. But the diehard bilingual supporters argued that a single year of testing was insufficient evidence and they stubbornly stood their ground.

- Aftermath of California Campaign Media, 1998-2000[27]

Then the second year’s test scores were released in August 2000, and the world changed.

Although the New York Times had covered the original Prop. 227 campaign and the initial implementation of classroom English throughout the state, its interest had then waned and almost two years had passed since its last article. But when I provided the new test score information to the Times educational reporters, they were very impressed, and their resulting coverage was greatly magnified by an ironic twist to the story worthy of a Hollywood script.

California contained a thousand-odd school districts, and mid-size Oceanside USD near San Diego had never attracted much attention, with its students mostly being the children of impoverished Latino immigrant families. Despite his Irish name, Oceanside Superintendent Ken Noonan was Mexican-American and many years earlier he had begun his career as a bilingual education teacher, even serving as the first president of the California Association of Bilingual Educators when he and three colleagues had originally founded the organization. Over the years, he had gradually become more and more doubtful about whether the bilingual programs actually worked, though he had still strongly opposed our initiative when it was on the ballot.

But after the measure passed, he decided that the new law needed to be obeyed, and he switched all his classes over to English, following the instructional requirements more strictly than almost any other California school district. This naturally aroused the tremendous hostility of organized bilingual groups, who denounced and attacked him, claiming his schools were violating Latino civil rights, and prompting a campaign of harassment by the militantly pro-bilingual State Department of Education. Meanwhile, those same activists greatly praised neighboring Vista USD, a district of similar size and demographics, which they claimed had some of the state’s best bilingual programs, and had largely retained them by ignoring the provisions of our initiative.

However, the newly released state test scores revealed that while Oceanside’s academic performance had risen dramatically, Vista’s had not. The national ranking of Oceanside’s Limited English second graders had jumped from 19th percentile to the 28th in reading and
from 27th to 41st in math, representing nearly a 50% rise in just two years, with the other grades also showed very large gains. Such rapid academic improvement was almost unprecedented in the annals of American educational reform.

For years, educational theorists had worked to convince the *Times* that young immigrant children required 5-7 years to learn English, but when the reporter visited the Oceanside schools, he was astonished to encounter six- or seven-year-olds who had learned to read, write, and speak English within just a few months. As a consequence, his account of the remarkable success of “English” in Oceanside and the rest of California ran as a front-page lead story in the Sunday edition of our national newspaper of record, and this quickly produced a wave of follow-on media coverage from *CBS News*, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Newsweek*.

Noonan himself deservedly became a national educational hero, discussing his remarkable results on the *PBS Newshour* and in a long *Washington Post* opinion piece. For many years, the bilingual activists had been widely feared in educational circles, and Noonan’s California colleagues recognized his tremendous courage in standing up to them, voting him Superintendent of the Year. Arnold Schwarzenegger later appointed him[28] to the California State Board of Education, where he was soon chosen as its president. So the story of “English” became an educational fairy tale with a happy ending.

- **Test Scores Rise, Surprising Critics of Bilingual Ban (PDF)[29]**
  *The New York Times* • Sunday, August 20, 2000, Front Page
- **California Scores (PDF)[30]** • Editorial
  *The Wall Street Journal* • Wednesday, August 23, 2000
- **Students Flourish Under ‘English Immersion’ (PDF)[31]**
  *USA Today* • Monday, August 28, 2000
- **Bilingual Education Fails Test, Exposing Deeper Problems (PDF)[32]** • Editorial
  *USA Today* • Monday, August 28, 2000
- **I Believed That Bilingual Education Was Best...Until the Kids Proved Me Wrong (PDF)[33]** by Ken Noonan
  *The Washington Post* • Sunday, September 3, 2000
- **The Lesson of Tough Love (PDF)[34]** by Robert J. Samuelson
  *Newsweek* • September 4, 2000
- **English Immersion: A Convert Speaks Out (PDF)[35]** by Kenneth Noonan
  *Principal Magazine* • September/October 2002

By 2002, four years of California test scores had been released, and the academic performance of more than a million immigrant students had roughly doubled since the passage of our initiative. Meanwhile, those remaining in the rapidly shrinking pool of surviving bilingual education programs had shown little if any improvement, demonstrating the enormous superiority of the English immersion approach.
During this same period another element of our initiative had unexpectedly also been gaining powerful support across the state. As mentioned above, my initiative had provided modest annual funding of $50 million for the creation of a new adult English-literacy program aimed at immigrants, partly included to ensure that anti-immigrant activists avoided aligning themselves with our political effort. During the campaign, our leftist and Latino-activist opponents had demolished their own credibility by cynically attacking that provision, denouncing it as a “taxpayer giveaway to immigrants” and making it the centerpiece of their media efforts. But those attacks had little success and the issue was quickly forgotten after the vote.

Many California immigrants had spent years struggling to learn English so they soon embraced this small new community program with tremendous enthusiasm. Newspapers across the state began reporting its great success, sometimes identifying it as part of Prop. 227 and sometimes not. As a result of that very favorable coverage, the Governor and Legislature—both erstwhile opponents of our initiative—soon increased the budget of the adult English education program by a factor of six.

- Prop. 227 Turns Adults into Tutors (PDF)[37]
- The San Diego Union-Tribune • Tuesday, February 16, 1999

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### California 2nd Grade STAR Scores, 1998-2002

#### Reading Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>ALL STUDENTS</th>
<th>LATINO(78)</th>
<th>NON-BILINGUAL LEP(201)</th>
<th>LIMITED ENGLISH LEP(191)</th>
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#### Language Scores

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- California Test Scores Media, August/September 2000[36]
For decades, language issues had been a leading source of friction and mistrust between immigrant Latinos and native-born Anglos, with the latter often assuming that newcomers had little interest in learning English and instead planned to establish permanent Spanish-language enclaves. But now they discovered just how eagerly those groups actually sought to learn English and have their children do the same in our public schools, so a major source of potential social conflict quickly dissipated.

Partly for these reasons, the politics of the state drastically changed over the next few years. For a decade, concerns over immigration and other explosive racial issues had been at the center of political conflict, but these matters now dropped to the lower levels of concern in most California public opinion surveys, usually ranking below jobs, housing, healthcare, and sometimes even traffic.

I last discussed the subject of bilingual education six years ago and at that time I explained the ironic consequences of the successful English Wars in California:

> When I’m driving, my car radio is invariably tuned to KOIT, the leading “easy listening” station in the San Francisco Bay area. My tastes are humdrum and unsophisticated, so the songs merely provide some pleasant background music, occasionally punctuated by commercial ads, mostly annoying but occasionally amusing.

> One of the better ones began running only recently, an AT&T spot touting its new family plan with unlimited data on multiple lines. The spot opens with a brother and sister discussing all the wonderful things they’re able to do with so much...
monthly data, including talking, texting, using social media, and playing games. Except for the smartphone technology being discussed and the traces of “Valley Speak” style and intonation, the two teenagers almost sound like they might have been plucked straight from a *Leave It to Beaver* episode set in the idealized suburbia of the hallowed 1950s.

But about half-way through, unexpected references began catching my attention. The boy mentions that the unlimited data plan also allows his mom to share comments on her favorite *novelas* and his dad to share pictures of his favorite soccer players. Hmm, I suddenly thought. And then a bit later, the boy teases his sister and she responds “*Mama! Carlos me esta molestando*”—“Mom! Carlos is bothering me”—causing the irritated mother to reply with a bit of scolding Spanish. I suddenly realized that the blond or freckled Southern California teenagers I’d been imagining in my mind’s eye were probably somewhat duskier in hue.

Every year AT&T ranks as one of America’s top advertisers, with an annual media budget in the billions, and the focus group research that goes into its marketing campaigns must surely render even the best-funded presidential effort amateurish and unscripted by comparison. So if AT&T believes that an appropriate phone-plan pitch to California’s millions of Latino families should involve teenagers speaking perfect accent-free English then switching to flawless Spanish, while their parents prefer the latter, that’s very likely correct.

Although the commercial did catch me a bit by surprise, it merely reinforced something I’ve occasionally noticed among the numerous Latino workers I regularly encounter in my daily life in the Palo Alto area. Certainly a large majority of the older ones have the weak or heavily-accented English that marks them as immigrants, perhaps even relatively recent arrivals. However, among young adults, say those in their twenties or so, it’s not uncommon to encounter speech patterns that would be absolutely indistinguishable from those of Mayflower descendants raised in lily-white suburbs—but which then seamlessly switch to perfect Spanish as soon as the need might arise.

I’m not sure exact numbers exist, but it wouldn’t surprise me if California today contains one of the largest concentrations of totally bilingual members of the younger generation found anywhere in the world. And ironically enough, an important factor behind that widespread rise of California bilingualism was probably our successful Prop. 227 campaign over eighteen years ago, which replaced so-called “bilingual education” in California’s public schools with intensive sheltered English immersion.

The reason for this apparent paradox is that “bilingual education” was largely a misnomer, and in practice the system invariably amounted to Spanish-almost-only instruction.

Most Latino immigrant children grow up with Spanish being the language of their home. Their families usually watch Spanish TV, listen to Spanish radio, and most of
the people in their neighborhood speak Spanish in their daily lives. So if these young children, knowing Spanish as their sole language, eagerly enter kindergarten or the first grade only to encounter classrooms in which nearly all the instruction is once again in Spanish, is it really so surprising that they might remain monolingual Spanish-speakers for a considerable number of years?

Our larger society is overwhelmingly English-oriented, and with the most popular movies and television shows being in English, all of those children did eventually learn our predominant national language, even if the pre-Prop. 227 schools hadn’t gradually introduced considerable English by the fifth or sixth grade. But for many students, losing those earliest five or six years of English-language instruction saddled them with a greatly reduced English vocabulary and a strong, permanent accent. They certainly learned English, but sometimes spent the rest of their lives having trouble reading, writing, or even speaking it properly.

Latino immigrant families in California tend to be working-class or working-poor, and if their children leave the local public schools being less than proficient in English, they are obviously doubly-disadvantaged, and would have a very difficult time getting a good job or pursuing higher education. But achieving the total fluency and literacy produced by immediate English immersion opened many doors, and in 2014—nearly two decades after Prop. 209 outlawed Affirmative Action in California higher education—newspaper headlines[48] announced that the number of Latinos had surpassed the number of whites admitted to the prestigious University of California system.

The whole notion that schools should teach English to children who already know Spanish hardly constituted a revolutionary pedagogical notion. After all, schools usually concentrate on teaching children what they don’t already know rather what they do, but with regard to language, this only became the case after the June 1998 passage of Prop. 227 and its full implementation in September of that year. A million or more immigrant schoolchildren were suddenly exposed to six or seven hours a day of English in their classrooms, quickly absorbing that new language “like little sponges,” while still often spending the remainder of their childhood in an almost entirely Spanish-speaking neighborhood environment. Given such a truly “bilingual” upbringing, it’s hardly surprising that over the last decade or two so many of them have become fully bilingual young adults.

In the early stages of the Prop. 227 campaign, I wrote a long op-ed for the Los Angeles Times later republished in the San Francisco Chronicle, and I think my analysis and predictions have been completely vindicated by later events:

- Bilingualism Works – But Bilingual Education Doesn’t (PDF)[49]
  The San Francisco Chronicle • Friday, January 30, 1998

**Taking the English Wars to Other States**
California contained some 40% of America’s bilingual programs, so I had hoped that their elimination would inspire similar efforts elsewhere or at the national level. But although I hadn’t planned any particular involvement, circumstances intervened.

The later stages of our campaign and its aftermath had generated considerable media coverage, and this naturally drew the attention of individuals who had been unsuccessfully fighting those same programs elsewhere for many years, notably in the neighboring state of Arizona. Maria Mendoza of Tucson contacted us, seeking our advice and assistance, and she soon helped gather together a small group of determined grass-roots activists in her own state, all of them Latino, including Glendale principal Margaret Garcia Dugan and Tucson high school teacher Hector Ayala.

With Arizona only a short flight away, I went out to meet with their group and was very impressed with their sincerity and commitment, so I agreed to help them place a clone of Prop. 227 on the November 2000 Arizona ballot. As I expected, the local media coverage was overwhelmingly favorable as reporters gradually discovered the dismal reality of their own state’s bilingual programs, though once again nearly the entire political establishment still lined up against us. We were massively outspent in advertising by a ratio of 20-to-1, but we still triumphed at the polls, winning by an even larger landslide of 26 points, after which Arizona’s public schools rapidly switched to English.

- Arizona Campaign Media, 1998-2000[50]

Arizona was hardly the only state in which our campaign had focused renewed public attention on the issue. Bilingual programs had a long and extremely controversial history in New York City, and in 1992 the neoconservative Manhattan Institute’s City Journal had published a lengthy article[51] describing their irrational nature and dismal failure, while in 1995 the Times itself had run an editorial[52] denouncing the city’s “Bilingual Prison.” The heavy media coverage of our campaign and its aftermath now revived the issue, and in January 1999 the prestigious New York Times Sunday Magazine published a major article[53] further highlighting the bizarre nature and dreadful failures of the local programs, which seemed to have crippled the education of generations of Latino immigrant children.

New York City is America’s media capital and I quickly realized that waging an “English” campaign there would surely attract unprecedented national coverage, far more than anything in California let alone Arizona. Moreover, the liberal Times already seemed to support the cause of English, while over the years there had been scattered stories of local protests by Latino parents in Brooklyn against their Spanish-language classes. A political victory in NYC, an overwhelmingly liberal Democratic megalopolis, might finally shake loose the timorous Republicans controlling Congress and lead to national legislation on the issue.

When I polled the question of “English in the Schools” using the same neutrally-phrased question employed by the major California newspapers, the results were striking[54]. The national numbers were extremely strong at 77% support to 19% opposition, but the New York numbers were even stronger at 79% to 14%. As a result, a Times Metro columnist published a very favorable 1999 piece[55] describing my hopes for a New York campaign and the enormous levels of potential local backing. The one missing ingredient was recruiting a critical mass of credible local supporters, and an ideal possibility seemed at hand.

https://www.unz.com/runz/the-english-wars-after-twenty-five-years/?display=footnoted
In late 1998 longtime New York Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan had announced his retirement, and the media was soon filled with expectations of a political “clash of the Titans” to replace him, pitting outgoing NYC Mayor Rudolph Giuliani against Hillary Clinton. I tested the strength of the “English” issue on that race in a Zogby poll[56] and was surprised at the tremendous impact.

Just as other polls indicated, Giuliani and Clinton were locked in a virtual dead-heat, each having just under half the vote and with very few undecideds. But if voters were informed that Giuliani supported requiring all-English instruction in the schools while Clinton was opposed, there was a gigantic swing of 39 points in his favor, and he won in a huge landslide, with his gains being especially strong among Democrats, Jews, blacks, and Asians. For example, a Jewish deficit of 21 points was transformed into a Jewish advantage of 41 points, representing a swing of 62 points.

I hoped that the Giuliani campaign might jump at this tempting political opportunity, and if such a very liberal Republican won his ultra-high-profile race based on “English” the political landscape would be drastically changed. Unfortunately, Giuliani decided against running, and despite several later trips to New York, I failed to enlist the necessary local supporters to champion the cause, so my NYC efforts went into hibernation and I focused entirely upon other political projects, including Arizona.

However, a year later the Times and the rest of the national media trumpeted the remarkable rise in California test scores due to “English,” and this reignited local interest in the issue. Giuliani was finishing out his second term in office and sought to leave behind an English language educational legacy. He soon established a Mayoral Task Force aimed at reforming the existing bilingual programs by reducing the number of years students were kept in mandatory all-Spanish classes and adding more of the English that had apparently worked so well in California.

NYC’s four daily newspapers led by the Times constituted a very powerful force in local politics and all of them began a barrage in favor of English in the schools, with the mass-circulation liberal tabloid Daily News running five consecutive editorials denouncing the ills of bilingual programs and demanding a shift to English. I was personally invited to the crucial Board of Education meeting and arrived with high hopes, only to see them dashed as the members wilted under the pressure of the fanatic bilingual activists who packed the hearing room. The unfortunate result was a unanimous vote for a fig-leaf reform proposal of no substance. The Times was obviously very unhappy with this outcome and solicited an op-ed from me[57], in which I condemned the lack of any serious reform, closing with the following sentences:

Faced with pressure from bilingual activists to do nothing and pressure from the media to do something, the conflicted leaders of New York schools have decided to do nothing but call it something. Two generations of failed bilingual instruction in New York City schools should be more than enough.
My “English” effort in New York City had been stillborn, but by the time it faded away, two other states had come along to replace it. From the earliest days of the California campaign, the national media had described the strong local opposition to the bilingual programs of Denver, Colorado, led by Rita Montero, a longtime Latino activist and former school board member.

Our November 2000 victory in neighboring Arizona inspired her to consider undertaking a similar project, so I soon met with her and her supporters in Denver, and we prepared an initiative for the 2002 Colorado ballot modeled on those of California and Arizona, successfully recruiting former Colorado governor Dick Lamm as a high-profile supporter. During the year that followed, our local media coverage was excellent, while the polls consistently showed huge leads in this strongly conservative state.

Meanwhile, even more significant developments began on the other side of the country. For decades Massachusetts had been notorious for its ultra-liberal politics, being the only state to support George McGovern in 1972 and home to the Kennedys and Michael Dukakis, while the local Republican Party barely existed.

In keeping with this ideological tradition, during the 1970s the Bay State had led the nation by enacting the first mandatory bilingual education requirement for all immigrant students, an extreme provision that proved almost totally unworkable in practice. Indeed, many of the books decrying America’s failing bilingual programs had been authored by Massachusetts educators and academics such as Rosalie Porter and Christine Rossell, and I began talking with some of...
them about organizing an initiative in their state. They introduced me to Cuban immigrant
Lincoln Tamayo, a high school principal in heavily Latino Chelsea, who agreed to lead the local
campaign.

Aside from the powerful political symbolism of eliminating America’s oldest bilingual program
in one of our most liberal states, I saw other major benefits to such a campaign, which might
focus intense local coverage on a largely ignored problem. Just as Wall Street was the center of
American finance and DC played the same role in politics, Massachusetts constituted the
geographical heart of elite academic education, being home to Harvard, MIT, BU, Tufts,
Northeastern, and numerous other colleges and universities, while its media market also
encompassed neighboring New England states containing Yale, Brown, and Dartmouth.

Over the decades, bilingual programs had deeply entrenched themselves within our leading
Schools of Education, which provided them a permanent base of support that was totally
shielded against any outside political or legal changes in educational policy. But I hoped that
the media coverage produced by a successful Massachusetts campaign might penetrate those
Ivy-covered walls and help foster ideological change by bringing the bizarre and illogical nature
of the programs to the direct attention of the wider academic community, thereby reshaping
their scholarly perspectives.

I’d been very pleased at the outcome of the Harvard University debate held during the original
California campaign, and not long after we launched our Massachusetts initiative, the Harvard
School of Education hosted a new debate before a packed crowd[60], pitting me directly
against faculty member Catherine Snow, who ranked as America’s foremost bilingual academic
theorist. The results were so satisfactory that we began distributing videocassette copies to
journalists and other influential parties, and the entire debate is now conveniently available on
Youtube:

Just as I had hoped, I later learned that prominent mainstream linguistic theorists had been
shocked when they discovered the nonsensical academic dogma that bilingual advocates had
long been promoting. I suspect that this revelation may have played an important role in
gradually shifting the intellectual landscape against those longstanding programs.

Our Massachusetts campaign also accrued an unexpected bonus. Over the years, Netflix CEO
Reed Hastings had developed a strong interest in supporting educational reforms, and Gov.
Gray Davis had appointed him to the California State Board of Education, where he eventually
served as president. Having very mainstream liberal views, he had naturally opposed our
initiative, but after it passed, the widespread media coverage of its tremendous success had
converted him into a staunch supporter of English in the schools, and he used his position to
block later attempts by bilingual activists to surreptitiously restore their programs. He was
originally from Massachusetts, and when he learned of our new efforts there, he made a sizable
donation to help place that measure on the ballot, allowing us to publicly proclaim his support.

Although both the Colorado and Massachusetts campaigns went very well, the outcomes
suddenly diverged at the very end. Colorado was a strongly Republican, conservative state, and
although the local Denver media outlets were much more moderate or liberal, our coverage had
been excellent, so that just a few weeks before the vote our lead had widened to around 30 points in local polls, seemingly assuring us of an easy victory.

But then the unexpected happened. A Denver woman named Pat Stryker had inherited a billion-dollar fortune from her grandfather, and her children were in a dual immersion program that she feared might be put at risk by our measure. For that reason, she suddenly put $3 million of advertising into the No campaign of that relatively small state, spending in just four or five weeks what candidates for Governor or the U.S. Senate might normally spend during a full year of campaigning. The leading local newspapers sharply criticized the resulting advertising campaign as exceptionally dishonest and misleading, but it swamped us nonetheless, and we lost by an eight point margin.

- **Colorado Campaign Media, 1997-2001**

Fortunately, events unfolded very differently in ultra-liberal Massachusetts. Although the teachers unions and other establishment groups funded a major, million-dollar television campaign against our measure, our position was so strong that I took the seemingly risky step of deciding not to spend a single dollar on advertising, thereby allowing me to later emphasize that striking point whenever I described our enormous landslide victory.

As it happened, Mitt Romney was on the same ballot, running as a very liberal Republican candidate for governor. Although he had initially opposed our measure, he later reversed himself, and when he became the Republican Presidential nominee in 2012, I explained how that fortuitous switch had played a crucial role in launching his national political career:

Unlike the vast majority of previous major-party presidential candidates, Romney has a remarkably slender record of election victories, having previously won just a single race, his 2002 election as governor of Massachusetts.

As it turned out, Romney’s decision was a fateful one. The *Boston Globe* and other media outlets soon noted that on almost every other major issue, his positions were identical to those of his Democratic opponent, O’Brien. Only support for English in the schools separated the two candidates.

When rival candidates have identical positions, campaigns often become unappealing slugfests, and that was the case throughout most of the 2002 gubernatorial race in Massachusetts. Romney bludgeoned O’Brien as a lifelong career politician who was part of a corrupt party machine, while O’Brien denounced Romney as a greedy, carpet-bagging Wall Street takeover artist—both charges being backed by millions of dollars of television attack ads.
As the election grew near, however, the hot-button question of whether or not all
public schools should teach their students English exploded into public awareness,
becoming far and away the biggest issue of the election, without a single dollar of
advertising having been spent on its behalf. When reporters from the Globe and
other newspapers went out and interviewed ordinary voters, many of them didn’t
much know or care about the candidates running for any office, including governor,
but almost everyone was talking about “English” and most were overwhelmingly
enthusiastic. Finally, Romney’s people noticed this and decided to hitch a ride on
the issue, so for the last few weeks of the campaign his advertising focused on the
fact that he supported “English” while his Democratic rival opposed it.

Then, on Election Day, our measure won by over 32 points, perhaps the largest
landslide of any contested initiative in modern Massachusetts history, while
Romney scraped across the finish line with 49.8 percent of the vote. And that’s how
Romney won his first and only election victory.

- Massachusetts Campaign Media, 2001-2002[65]

The last act of the English Wars came a few months later in February 2003

Although the vast majority of California school districts had finally begun complying with our
1998 law and shifted nearly all their immigrant students to English, some pockets of resistance
remained. The leading such example was in Santa Ana, probably the most heavily Latino
immigrant city in America, with the vast majority of its 300,000 residents having that
background.

The most powerful local political figure was a certain Larry “Nativo” Lopez, a longtime Latino
activist. Although he himself was American-born and English-speaking, Lopez had built his
Hispanic immigrant service organization Hermanidad Mexicana Nacional into a strong political
machine, using it to place himself and several allies in control of the Santa Ana School Board.
Over the years, he had easily survived swirling accusations of fraud and corruption[66], and
was widely believed to hold enormous sway over the region’s huge and growing Hispanic
immigrant population, with a longtime local political columnist even characterizing[67] him as
the Jesse Jackson or Al Sharpton of Orange County. Indeed, despite being perceived as a
radical Hispanic activist, rightwing Orange County Republicans so feared his supposed
influence among the rising tide of Latino immigrants that they dutifully attended his fund-
raisers, while normally vengeful Democratic Gov. Gray Davis suffered his profanity-laced public
attacks[68] without retaliation.

From the earliest days[69] of our 1997 initiative campaign, Lopez had been one of our fiercest
opponents in California, and after our initiative passed in a landslide, he repeatedly
claimed[70] that he would block its implementation in the Santa Ana school district that he
dominated, perhaps because of a political alliance he had struck with local bilingual education
activists.
Meanwhile, Santa Ana’s stubborn refusal to switch to English had outraged a number of local Latino parents, and for several years they had been complaining to us about the situation, leading to discussions of filing a lawsuit on their behalf. But one of them suddenly suggested the more radical strategy of launching a recall campaign against Lopez and his allies, and despite my initial skepticism, she won me over to the idea.

The resulting Santa Ana recall campaign completely seized the attention of the residents of the city and the surrounding areas of Southern California, and with our assistance, the necessary signatures were gathered during 2002, leading to a vote in February 2003. Although Lopez had made many other political enemies over the years, the issue of English in the schools was naturally the centerpiece of the entire campaign, and despite his heavy campaign spending he lost by an astonishing 39 point margin in America’s most heavily Latino immigrant city. One of California’s leading statewide columnists took note of this political earthquake[71], as did the Editorial Page[72] of the Wall Street Journal.

For many years Lopez had been the much feared nemesis of Orange County’s declining Republican Party establishment, and his sudden political demise over “English” at the hands of outraged Latino parents struck them as almost miraculous. The State Republican Party Chairman lived in the region and just a few weeks later he helped launch the recall campaign targeting Gov. Davis that placed Arnold Schwarzenegger in office, so I’ve always assumed that effort was partly inspired by our successful Lopez recall.
America After the English Wars

The combined impact of the huge rise in California’s immigrant test scores, the sweeping victory for our campaign in ultra-liberal Massachusetts, and the even more sweeping victory a few months later in America’s most heavily Latino immigrant city seemed to settle the question of English in the schools, and any lingering controversy over bilingual education disappeared from the media.

Thus, when a bitter national debate over comprehensive immigration reform and amnesty erupted in 2006, both sides emphasized the importance of ensuring that all immigrants learned English as quickly as possible and advocated English language education programs supporting that goal.

As a further example of this new consensus, in 2007 a front-page story on California’s burgeoning Latino immigrant population casually quoted[74] the director of Santa Clara County’s child development programs as explaining:

“Our goal is that they [Latino immigrant children] become fluent in English by the time they’re ready for kindergarten...That’s where we’re trying to close the achievement gap, by supporting English so they can do well in school.”

Similarly, when the subsequent financial crisis forced the closure of one of Northern California’s last remaining bilingual programs in early 2009, the local superintendent defended his decision[75] in blunt terms:

Superintendent George Perez, himself a former bilingual teacher, dismissed the parental complaints as being completely unreasonable given the very difficult budgetary pressures facing all schools in California. He also pointed out that teaching Spanish was anyway not the purpose of the public schools, given that a decade earlier “a law was passed that we teach in English.”

As the years passed, bilingual education was increasingly forgotten, with fewer and fewer elected officials or political activists even remembering that a program so totally irrational had once dominated the education of millions of immigrant students.

This was underscored by the near-silence of so many of its fiercest erstwhile critics. Among immigration opponents, the looming danger of an America balkanized along language lines had always been one of their most viscerally powerful arguments, but no mention of the issue was now found whenever they made their case.
Peter Brimelow runs VDare.com, the leading hard-core anti-immigration webzine, and his fears of linguistic fragmentation stretched back to his first book published in 1986. But when he was invited in 2012 to give a speech on the perils of bilingualism at a major conservative conference, his focus was primarily upon Canada[76] and he never even mentioned America’s past system of bilingual education, while he defended his topic against accusations that it was “boring.” I also recall that around the same time, he once included a very rare denunciation of those vanished programs in one of his columns, but felt compelled to explain the meaning of the term, which might have been unfamiliar to many of his younger anti-immigrationist readers.

Similarly, Ann Coulter’s best-selling 2015 screed Adios America![77] denounced immigrants, especially Hispanic immigrants, on all possible grounds, but the term “bilingual education” appeared nowhere in the 22 page index, nor did any of the numerous references to “English” suggest that immigrants were failing to learn the language, let alone that our public schools were not teaching it to their children.

There’s a famous Sherlock Holmes story about “the dog that didn’t bark” and this evidence from America’s foremost critics of Hispanic immigration seems quite telling. I suspect one major reason for their strange reluctance to even commemorate such a sweeping victory on one of their leading cultural issues was concern that it might sabotage their broader ideological agenda by suggesting that the other immigration problems they regularly highlighted could also be successfully addressed.

The total silence of the Democratic and Republican party establishments is equally understandable. The California leadership of both parties had strongly opposed the shift to English, and their successors must surely have been embarrassed that the festering problem had been ignored for decades, while California’s major media outlets had a similarly negative track-record that they hoped might be forgotten. Who among these individuals would be willing to admit that they had spent so many years blindly supporting an educational system founded upon the bizarre theory that a very young child required seven years to learn English?

However, the story of the California English Wars did include a very ironic postscript, one that further demonstrated the sweeping success that we had achieved.

Although nearly the entire world had forgotten about bilingual education, its core of zealous advocates remained fully committed to the system, and they eventually seized an opportunity.

Dual-immersion programs aimed at teaching Spanish to Anglo youngsters had always been popular, and the affluent white parents who favored this curriculum had fiercely opposed our original initiative even though students who already knew English were completely exempt from all restrictions. Since 1998 the number of these programs had steadily grown although they still accounted for merely a tiny sliver of the state’s overall enrollment.
For best results, such classes required that half the students be native Spanish-speakers, whose parents could sign waivers allowing them to opt-out of the Prop. 227 restrictions, just as we had allowed. But as the years went by, fewer and fewer Latino immigrants could be persuaded to place their children in these Spanish-language classes, preventing their expansion, while the waiting list of Anglo students grew longer and longer. So those affluent Anglo parents began lobbying Sacramento to solve the problem and allow Latino students to be enrolled in the programs without their parents’ written consent.

With the past history of California’s bilingual programs merely being a dim and fading memory, their lobbying effort proved successful. Democrats and Republicans united[78] to ensure a plentiful supply of immigrant students for dual-immersion programs by placing Prop. 58 on the ballot, aimed at repealing some of the Prop. 227 requirements. The measure bore the rather deceptive official title of “English language education” and backed by $5 million of advertising, it passed overwhelmingly in November 2016. But just as I predicted at the time[79], it seems to have had no significant impact upon the overall system of immigrant education established in 1998, and gave me an opportunity to recapitulate the story in several radio debates.

Last year William H. Frey of the Brookings Institution published a series of lengthy reports[80] on American demographic trends. One of his charts showed the striking ethnic shift in our youthful population, with whites having already declined to a minority of those under age 18, while Hispanics had increased to more than a quarter of the total.

![Figure 7. Population under age 18: Race–ethnic profiles, 1990-2020](image)

Reasonable projections suggest that within another generation America will have a population of youthful Latinos that is comparable in size to that of the corresponding white cohort, a demographic transformation that surely would have shocked most Americans of the twentieth century. But consider the consequences for our society if those two young populations having similar numbers were still being educated in different languages.
The racially-charged issue of foreign immigration had long had enormous resonance among the conservative whites who dominate GOP primaries, and in 2016 Donald Trump successfully exploited it to crush his establishment rivals and seize the Republican Presidential nomination, followed by his upset victory over Hillary Clinton that November.

Trump’s populist denunciations of Latino immigrants included all sorts of accusations, many of them dubious or wildly exaggerated, and under other circumstances, the visceral issue of language differences would surely have been near the top of his list. But by 2016 everyone—even Donald Trump—understood that Latinos were eager to learn English, so the candidate never even raised the matter.

Despite Trump’s obvious failures in office and his endless bombast, the increasingly “woke” policies of his Democratic opponents during his 2020 reelection campaign proved extremely unpopular among ordinary Latino voters. The chaos and crime engendered by the Black Lives Matter movement combined with the loud progressive demands to “defund the police” produced a strong swing towards Trump, who won a remarkable 38% of the Hispanic vote[81] despite making almost no effort in that direction.

At the same time, a heavily-funded California ballot measure to restore Affirmative Action lost in a 14 point landslide[84], with strong indications that California’s large Hispanic population had opposed it[85] just like their state’s whites, another unpleasant surprise for the Democratic Party leadership.

This surprising Republican ethnic tide has actually accelerated during the past year, with many polls now showing Hispanic voters evenly split between the two parties[86]. With language barriers removed, the political positions of working-class Hispanics are increasingly converging with those of their working-class white counterparts. More than twenty years ago I had published numerous articles advocating and predicting exactly this political realignment.

- The Right Kind of Outreach for the GOP[87]
  The Weekly Standard • March 1, 1999 • 2,600 Words
- The Right Way for Republicans to Handle Ethnicity in Politics[88]
  The American Enterprise • April 2000 • 3,200 Words
- How the Republicans Lost California[89]
  The Wall Street Journal • August 28, 2000 • 1,300 Words

In late 2020 I published a lengthy survey[90] on the intellectual history of American white racialism and one section discussed The Dispossessed Majority, a seminal text written a half-century ago by Wilmot Robertson, which revived that ideological movement after its post-World War II eclipse.
Despite the passage of several decades, I argued that Robertson’s general framework seemed surprisingly relevant in today’s America, but required certain important redefinitions of his “Majority” category, with that crucial transformation having been facilitated by the successful outcome of the English Wars.

Running some 200,000 words, Robertson’s opus soon became the ur-text of modern American White Nationalism, reestablishing the ideological basis for a movement once anchored in the writings of men such as Lothrop Stoddard but which had largely disappeared in the aftermath of World War II.

From its earliest days, America had been run by its Anglo-Saxon core along with the assimilated descendents of closely-related Northern European immigrant groups, who together constituted both the bulk of the population and a large majority of its ruling elites. But Robertson argued that during the previous generation or two, a quiet revolution had steadily shifted political and social control into the hands of America’s tiny Jewish minority, thereby transforming the country’s huge white Gentile population into “the dispossessed majority” of his title, even as the heavily Jewish media ensured that very few members of that group had recognized this ongoing transformation.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the central fault line in American society had almost invariably been that separating black from white, with few scholars exploring any residual conflicts between different white ethnic groups. Large scale European immigration had been halted in 1924, and it was widely believed that decades of action by America’s powerful melting-pot had mostly eliminated the sharp differences between the various flavors of whites, a perception strongly encouraged by the media of that era. In fact, I suspect that one reason Beyond the Melting Pot by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan had attracted so much attention and became such a sociological classic in 1963 was that it focused on a subject otherwise so little-discussed and one that went against the prevailing ideas of the period.

By contrast, The Dispossessed Majority marked an ideological return to the early decades of the twentieth century, when intra-white conflict along ethnic lines had been the central issue. Indeed, Robertson reverted to the old-fashioned separation of Europeans into the Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean sub-races, a usage long since fallen into disrepute and popular disuse. Although blacks, Asians, and other non-white groups were given some attention, his primary focus was on differences between American whites.

In particular, the author sharply distinguished between “assimiliable” and “non-assimiliable” white minorities. By his reckoning, America’s so-called “Majority” population—the Old Stock Anglo-Saxons and other fully assimilated Northern
European ethnic groups—constituted just under 60% of our total population. An additional 12% fell into the category of “assimilable white minorities,” including the Irish, Poles, and French Canadians. But another 8% of the population consisted of white ethnicities he considered sufficiently alien as to be classified as “non-assimilable,” including Jews, Southern Italians, and Greeks, which was quite an intellectually scandalous position to take in the early 1970s.

A book first published in 1972 is now nearly a half-century old, and must be evaluated in that light, so its numerous references to the threat of Communism and the Soviet Union are obviously quite dated. But taken as a whole, I think the text holds up very well, probably remaining more relevant to the domestic problems of our own present-day American society than all but a sliver of the works published around the same time. Indeed, although I had found it quite interesting a decade ago, the events of the last few years—and especially the last few months—seem to have enormously increased its contemporary relevance. Robertson—whose real name was Humphrey Ireland—died in 2005 at the age of 90, but I think he would have found our current domestic problems an almost straight-line extrapolation of those that he had first laid out several decades ago.

Most remarkably, I think an updated version of his central ethnographic framework might be a useful means of analyzing the fault-lines in today’s American society. Although Robertson might not necessarily have agreed, I believe that the last two generations have succeeded in fully merging virtually all of America’s white Gentile ethnic groups—whether “assimilable” or “non-assimilable”—into what he had defined as the Majority population, with few if any sharp distinctions remaining. So by that standard, today’s Majority is almost exactly the same fraction of our national population as the somewhat different Majority that he had defined fifty years ago.

And I would argue that an even more profound change has been that the bulk of America’s non-whites—most Hispanic and Asian groups—have now clearly shifted into Robertson’s category of “assimilable minorities,” or perhaps in many cases have already even become fully-assimilated members of our Majority population. Such major revisions obviously do violence to the ideological beliefs of an author who was born more than a century ago, but I think they much better reflect the realities of today’s American society than do his sharp distinctions between Europeans of Nordic and Alpine racial ancestry.

Perhaps to some extent my sociological analysis is a selfish one. Throughout world history differences of language have been among the sharpest barriers separating ethnic groups, so I believe that my own success two decades ago in dismantling the widespread system of Spanish-almost-only “bilingual education” in California and elsewhere throughout the country has probably played a large role in achieving this reclassification[91] of America’s large and rapidly growing Hispanic population, now already 17% of the national total.
And oddly enough, under this revised ethnic framework a case can be made that the vast demographic changes of the last fifty years have ultimately resulted in an America whose Majority and assimilable minorities together now constitute a much larger fraction of our national population than they did when Robertson’s book first appeared.

Print and Television Media Clips

Since 1980 America’s Hispanic population has quadrupled, now approaching 19% of the national total and still rising. An enormous social program that had greatly impacted the lives and education of many millions of Hispanic youngsters for decades has almost entirely vanished, taking with it nearly all memory of its former existence or the circumstances of its elimination.

My account of that latter story has necessarily been a brief summary of events that stretched over a number of years. But for those who might wish to dig more deeply into this subject, the most comprehensive coverage of the origins, history, and demise of that enormous but forgotten program is available on the English for the Children website[92] that we established during the course of our campaigns:

English for the Children Media Archives[93]

- 1975 • 1 Item[94]
- 1977 • 3 Items[95]
- 1978 • 3 Items[96]
- 1979 • 1 Item[97]
- 1980 • 52 Items[98]
- 1981 • 44 Items[99]
- 1982 • 12 Items[100]
- 1983 • 24 Items[101]
- 1984 • 12 Items[102]
- 1985 • 79 Items[103]
- 1986 • 90 Items[104]
- 1987 • 89 Items[105]
- 1988 • 44 Items[106]
- 1989 • 37 Items[107]
- 1990 • 54 Items[108]
- 1991 • 43 Items[109]
- 1992 • 50 Items[110]
- 1993 • 103 Items[111]
- 1994 • 145 Items[112]
- 1995 • 256 Items[113]
- 1996 • 173 Items[114]
- 1997 • 586 Items[115]
- 1998 • 2072 Items[116]
I have also mined my very extensive archives of major print articles and television clips to provide a wealth of additional supporting information. These contents are grouped together in a series of distinct sections, presented in rough chronological order.

**Early California Campaign Media, 1997/1998**

- Bilingual Schooling Is Failing, Parents Say (PDF)
- The Los Angeles Times • Tuesday, January 16, 1996
- Campaign Targets Bilingual Education (PDF)
- The Los Angeles Times • Wednesday, July 9, 1997
- Bilingual Bunk (PDF) by Jill Stewart
- New Times Los Angeles • July 24, 1997
- Desperate to Learn English (PDF) by Alice Callaghan
- The New York Times • Friday, August 15, 1997
- Cause Without Rebels (PDF) by Gregory Rodriguez
- LA Weekly • August 15, 1997 • 1,300 Words
- Separate and Unequal (PDF)
- The Economist • August 30, 1997
- Unlikely Ally in English-Only Clash (PDF)
- The San Mateo County Times • Wednesday, September 10, 1997
- Bilingual Education Gets Little Support (PDF)
- The Los Angeles Times • Wednesday, October 15, 1997, Front Page
- Star Latino Teacher Joins Bilingual Foes (PDF)
- The Sacramento Bee • Thursday, October 16, 1997
- The Storm Over Bilingual Ed (PDF) by Joanne Jacobs
- The San Jose Mercury News • Thursday, November 6, 1997
- Is It Hasta La Vista for Bilingual Ed? (PDF)
- U.S. News • November 24, 1997
- Big Majorities In Poll Support Bilingual Limit (PDF)
- The San Francisco Chronicle • Tuesday, December 9, 1997, Front Page
- Bilingual Barrio (PDF) by Glenn Garvin
- Reason Magazine • January 1998, Cover Story • 8,500 Words
- English Spoken Here (PDF) by David Hill
- Teacher Magazine • January 1998 • 4,200 Words
- Bilingual Ban Could Override Proposition 187 (PDF) by Allan J. Favish
- The Los Angeles Times • Friday, January 9, 1998
- Bilingualism Works – But Bilingual Education Doesn’t (PDF) by Ron Unz
- The San Francisco Chronicle • Friday, January 30, 1998
- Unz’s Bilingual Measure Assailed from the Right (PDF)
- The Sacramento Bee • Sunday, February 1, 1998
- Unz Takes Blow from the Right (PDF)
- The San Jose Mercury News • Monday, February 9, 1998
Mother Tongue-Tied [139] • Editorial

The San Jose Mercury News • Monday, March 16, 1998

English Initiative’s Spanish-Speaking Roots [140]

The San Jose Mercury News • Sunday, March 22, 1998, Front Page

Poverty Plays Significant Role in Classroom Performance [141]

The San Jose Mercury News • Sunday, March 22, 1998

Orange County Districts Revolt in Different Way [142]

The San Jose Mercury News • Sunday, March 22, 1998

Making Schools Responsible for Progress Could Lead to Student Achievement Boost [143]

The San Jose Mercury News • Sunday, March 22, 1998

Television Clips – 162m
1. News, KABC/Los Angeles, July 8, 1997[144], 3m
2. Week in Review, Century Cable/Los Angeles, July 25, 1997[145], 14m
3. Life & Times, KCET/Los Angeles, July 28, 1997[146], 13m
4. Jim Lehrer Newshour, PBS Network, September 15, 1997[147], 22m
5. California Capitol Week, KVIE/Sacramento, September 5, 1997[148], 14m
6. News, ABC Network, December 11, 1997[149], 3m
7. Bob Navarro’s Journal, KCBS/Los Angeles, December 1997[150], 13m
8. Sacramento On-Line, Fox40/Sacramento, December 12, 1997[151], 25m
9. New California Media, KQED/San Francisco, July 1997[152], 21m
10. Our Town, KTBN/Santa Ana, January 29, 1998[153], 32m

Late California Campaign Media, 1998

Unusual Crusade: Que Pasa Aqui? [154]

The Los Angeles Times • Sunday, April 5, 1998

Riordan Backs Move to End Bilingual Classes [155]

The Los Angeles Times • Friday, April 10, 1998

Asian American Leaders Endorse Prop. 227 [156]

The Los Angeles Times • Friday, April 10, 1998

English Lessons in California [157] by Gregory Rodriguez

The Nation • April 20, 1998 • 2,400 Words

Prop. 227’s Critics Attack Mandated Adult-Literacy Cost [158]

The Sacramento Bee • Thursday, April 23, 1998

Tele-Crapola [159] by Jill Stewart

New Times Los Angeles • April 23, 1998

Education Secretary Blasts Proposition 227 [160]

The San Francisco Chronicle • Tuesday, April 28, 1998

Immerse Them in English [161] by Richard Cohen

The Washington Post • Thursday, April 30, 1998

Voting on Bilingual Ed [162] • Editorial

The Washington Post • Thursday, April 30, 1998

The Making of an Initiative [163] by Michael J. Fitzgerald

California Lawyer • May 1998 • 3,600 Words

Ron Unz, Swimming Instructor [164] • Editorial
The Economist • May 2, 1998
Big Ad Push by Prop. 227 Foes (PDF)[165]

The Sacramento Bee • Thursday, May 7, 1998
Spanish-TV Mogul Funds Prop. 227 Foes (PDF)[166]

The Sacramento Bee • Friday, May 22, 1998
$1.5 Million Is Given to Measure’s Opponents (PDF)[167]

The Los Angeles Times • Friday, May 22, 1998
Republican Billionaire Owner of Spanish Language TV Network Donates Millions to Defeat Proposition 227 (PDF)[168]

English for the Children • May 24, 1998
KrashenBurn (PDF)[169] by Jill Stewart

New Times Los Angeles • May 28, 1998, Cover Story • 5,600 Words
Squeeze Play (PDF)[170] by Howard Blume and Ben Ehrenreich

LA Weekly • May 29, 1998, Cover Story • 5,400 Words
Bilingual Education Is Facing Its Demise in California Vote (PDF)[171]

Persistent Questioning Gets Right Sound Bite (PDF)[172]

The Sacramento Bee • Sunday, May 31, 1998
Big Victory for Measure To End Bilingual Education (PDF)[173]

The San Francisco Chronicle • Wednesday, June 3, 1998, Front Page
Polls, Polls, Polls on Proposition 227 (PDF)[174]

English for the Children • June 1998
Despite Massive Opposition Campaign, Proposition 227 Sweeps to Landslide Victory (PDF)[175]

English for the Children • June 5, 1998

Television Clips – 163m
1. News, KSEE/Fresno, April 27, 1998[176], 2m
2. Life & Times, KCET/Los Angeles, April 27, 1998[177], 13m
3. World News, CNN Network, May 1, 1998[178], 2m
4. Editorials, Univision Network, March 1998[179], 3m
5. Ads, Yes on 227, May 1998[180], 2m
6. Ads, Dick Riordan, May 1998[181], 2m
7. Editorial, Univision Network, May/June 1998[182], 1m
8. Ad, No on 227, May/June 1998[183], 1m
11. Talkback Live, CNN Network, May 29, 1998[186], 27m
12. Life & Times, KCET/Los Angeles, May 27, 1998[187], 18m
13. Good Morning America, ABC Network, June 1, 1998[188], 7m
14. Today Show, NBC Network, June 2, 1998[189], 9m
15. Early Show, CBS Network, June 2, 1998[190], 3m
16. Week in Review, Century Cable/Los Angeles, May 15, 1998[191], 28m
17. KGO/San Francisco, May 31, 1998[192], 29m

Harvard University Debate, March 3, 1998
Major California Debates, 1998 – 186m
1. Communidad del Valle, KNTV/San Jose, May 10, 1998[193], 23m
2. Newswatch, Cable Co-op/Palo Alto, April 1, 1998[194], 26m
4. Vista LA, KABC/Los Angeles, May 1998[196], 21m
5. Beyond the Headlines, Jewish TV/Los Angeles, May 1998[197], 26m
6. One on One, MediaOne/Los Angeles, May 19, 1998[198], 60m

Aftermath of California Campaign Media, 1998-2000

After Bilingual Education (PDF)[199] • Editorial
The Washington Post • Monday, June 8, 1998
Superintendent as Jailbird (PDF)[200] • Editorial
The San Francisco Examiner • Tuesday, June 9, 1998
Prop. 227 Court Challenge Fails (PDF)[201]
The San Jose Mercury News • Thursday, July 16, 1998, Front Page
State Board Grapples With Prop. 227 (PDF)[202]
The Los Angeles Times • Saturday, August 1, 1998
With Gestures, But Not Chaos, Prop. 227 Begins (PDF)[203]
The Los Angeles Times • Tuesday, August 4, 1998, Front Page
Largely Latino School Is Closely Watched for Reaction to Immersion (PDF)[204]
The Los Angeles Times • Saturday, August 8, 1998
California Schools Toddle as Bilingualism Ends (PDF)[205]
The New York Times • Saturday, August 8, 1998
Unlocking the Mystery of Model B (PDF)[206] by Robert A. Jones
The Los Angeles Times • Sunday, August 16, 1998
Backers of 227 May Not Be Getting What They Voted For (PDF)[207] by Douglas Lasken
The San Jose Mercury News • Wednesday, September 2, 1998
Responses to Prop. 227 All Over the Map (PDF)[208]
The Los Angeles Times • Wednesday, September 2, 1998
Schools Are Subverting the People’s Will (PDF)[209] by Alice Callaghan
The Los Angeles Times • Thursday, September 3, 1998
Unz: District Violates Law (PDF)[210]
The San Jose Mercury News • Monday, September 21, 1998
California Bilingual Teaching Lives On After Vote to Kill It (PDF)[211]
The New York Times • Saturday, October 3, 1998
Bilingual Education Support Running at Under 4% Among Immigrant Parents in Los Angeles and Orange Counties (PDF)[212]
English for the Children • October 22, 1998
English-Only Teaching Is a Surprise Hit (PDF)[213]
The Los Angeles Times • Wednesday, January 13, 1999, Front Page
True-Blue Believers Now in English-Only Schools (PDF)[214]
The Orange County Register • Wednesday, February 3, 1999, Front Page
One-Language Rule Produces Winners (PDF)[215]
The Los Angeles Times (Orange County) • Tuesday, February 16, 1999

https://www.unz.com/runz/the-english-wars-after-twenty-five-years/?display=footnoted
A Year of Promise, Progress (PDF)[216]

The Los Angeles Times (Orange County) • Tuesday, June 22, 1999
California’s Language Wars, Part II (PDF)[217]

National Journal • July 31, 1999
California and the End of White America[3] by Ron Unz

Commentary Magazine • November 1999
Letters to the Editors (PDF)[218]

Commentary Magazine • February 2000
English-Only Test Scores Up (PDF)[219]

The San Jose Mercury News • Sunday, December 26, 1999, Front Page
Test Scores Up, But Spirits Down (PDF)[220] by Joanne Jacobs

The San Jose Mercury News • Thursday, December 30, 1999
Success Story (PDF)[221]

The Santa Cruz County Sentinel • Tuesday, February 8, 2000, Front Page
Taking the Step (PDF)[222]

The Santa Cruz County Sentinel • Wednesday, February 9, 2000, Front Page
English-Only Works (PDF)[223]

The Los Angeles Daily News • Wednesday, May 17, 2000, Front Page
In Plain English (PDF)[224] by Michael Barone

The National Interest • May 29, 2000

Adult English Tutoring Program

Prop. 227 Turns Adults into Tutors (PDF)[37]

The San Diego Union-Tribune • Tuesday, February 16, 1999
Learning English Together (PDF)[38]

The Orange County Register • Tuesday, March 9, 1999
More Than Just English Lessons (PDF)[39]

The Riverside Press-Enterprise • Monday, April 26, 1999
Setting an Example (PDF)[40]

The Orange County Register • Wednesday, April 28, 1999
English for Parents (PDF)[41]

The San Francisco Chronicle • Tuesday, May 4, 1999
Children Benefit When Parents Learn English (PDF)[42] by Joanne Jacobs

The San Jose Mercury News • Monday, May 22, 2000
Legislator Visits as Families Study (PDF)[43]

The Riverside Press-Enterprise • Saturday, June 2, 2001
English Class Paves Way for Parents, Kids (PDF)[44]

The San Jose Mercury News • Monday, June 18, 2001
Maderans Press for Adult English Program (PDF)[45]

The Fresno Bee • Wednesday, June 20, 2001
Bringing Mom to School Helps the Transition (PDF)[46]

The Los Angeles Times • Wednesday, March 27, 2002

Public Opinion Polls

Giuliani vs. Clinton, Zogby Poll (PDF)[225]

English for the Children • September 1999

Campbell vs. Feinstein, California Poll (PDF)[226]
California Test Scores Media, August/September 2000

Test Scores Rise, Surprising Critics of Bilingual Ban (PDF)[240]

Results After Two Years
The New York Times • Sunday, August 20, 2000, Front Page
California Scores (PDF)[241] • Editorial

The Wall Street Journal • Wednesday, August 23, 2000
Students Flourish Under ‘English Immersion’ (PDF)[242]

USA Today • Monday, August 28, 2000
Bilingual Education Fails Test, Exposing Deeper Problems (PDF)[243] • Editorial

USA Today • Monday, August 28, 2000
I Believed That Bilingual Education Was Best...Until the Kids Proved Me Wrong (PDF)[244] by Ken Noonan

The Washington Post • Sunday, September 3, 2000
The Lesson of Tough Love (PDF)[245] by Robert J. Samuelson

Newsweek • September 4, 2000
Teach English (PDF)[246] • Editorial

The Washington Post • Thursday, August 9, 2001
Speaking Two Languages, Both English (PDF)[247] by William Raspberry

The Washington Post • Monday, August 20, 2001

Oceanside Print Articles
Oceanside Unified Denounced by CA Department of Education for Doubling Immigrant Test Scores, Defended by Prop. 227 Author Ron Unz (PDF)[248]

English for the Children • October 3, 2000
O'Side District Rapped Over Bilingual Ed (PDF)[249]

The North County Times • Tuesday, October 3, 2000, Front Page
Prop. 227 Author Criticizes Probe (PDF)[250]
The English Wars After Twenty-Five Years, by Ron Unz - The Unz Review

**The North County Times** • Wednesday, October 4, 2000, Front Page
School District May Challenge State Complaint (PDF)[251]

**The San Diego Union-Tribune** • Wednesday, October 4, 2000
Oceanside Scores (PDF)[252] by Thornhill

**The North County Times** • Thursday, October 5, 2000
Test-Score Gains Fill Schools With Pride (PDF)[253]

**The San Diego Union-Tribune** • Friday, October 6, 2000
English Immersion: A Convert Speaks Out (PDF)[254] by Kenneth Noonan

**Principal Magazine** • September/October 2002

**Television Clips – 112m**
1. CBS Network News, September 3, 2000[255], 3m
2. ABC World News Tonight, September 20, 2000[256], 3m
3. Hannity & Colmes, Fox Network, August 28, 2000[257], 9m
4. Jim Lehrer Newshour, PBS Network, August 23, 2000[258], 14m
5. McLaughlin Group, PBS Network, September 3, 2000[259], 4m
6. CBS Early Show, September 12, 2000[260], 7m
7. News, KFMB/San Diego, August 30, 2000[261], 3m
8. News, KGTV/San Diego, August 29, 2000[262], 3m
9. News, KFMB/San Diego, August 21, 2000[263], 2m
10. The Edge with Paula Zahn, Fox Network, xxx[264], 10m
11. News, KVOA/Tucson, August 22, 2000[265], 4m
12. News, KDFW/Dallas, August 23, 2000[266], 3m
13. News, KDVR/Denver, August 22, 2000[267], 2m
14. News, WABC/New York, September 12, 2000[268], 3m
15. The Big Story, WRNN/New York, September 25, 2000[269], 13m
16. Take Issue, BAY TV/San Francisco, September 25, 2000[270], 31m

**Arizona Campaign Media, 1998-2000**

Statewide Push to Kill Bilingual Education Gains (PDF)[271]

**The Arizona Daily Star** • Sunday, August 2, 1998, Front Page
Some Claim Bilingual Class Tough to Get Out Of (PDF)[272]

**The Tucson Citizen** • Wednesday, September 2, 1998
Bilingual Programs Failing (PDF)[273] by Ruben Navarrette Jr.

**The Arizona Republic** • Sunday, November 22, 1998
Voters to Decide on Bilingual Ed in Arizona (PDF)[274]

**The Arizona Daily Star** • Wednesday, June 28, 2000, Front Page
Bilingual Schooling Targeted (PDF)[275]

**The Arizona Republic** • Wednesday, June 28, 2000, Front Page
Arizona Win Encourages Bilingual-Ed Opponents (PDF)[276]

**The Arizona Republic** • Monday, November 20, 2000, Front Page

**Television Clips – 152m**
1. News, KVOA/Tucson, August 14, 1998[277], 4m
5. News, KNXV/Phoenix, January 6, 1999[278], 2m
New York Media, 1999-2001

The Bilingual Ghetto (PDF)[304] by Stephanie Gutmann

Why New York's Schools Won't Teach Immigrants English

The City Journal • Winter 1992 • 5,200 Words

New York's Bilingual 'Prison' (PDF)[305] • Editorial

The New York Times • Thursday, September 21, 1995

The Bilingual Barrier (PDF)[306] by James Traub

The New York Times Magazine • Sunday, January 31, 1999 • 3,500 Words

Polyglot City Raises a Cry For English (PDF)[307] by John Tierney

The New York Times • Monday, August 16, 1999

Giuliani vs. Clinton, Zogby New York Poll (PDF)[308]

English for the Children • September 1999

A Failure in Any Language (PDF)[309] • Editorial

The New York Daily News • Saturday, October 7, 2000

New Hope for New Arrivals (PDF)[310] • Editorial

The New York Daily News • Sunday, October 8, 2000

Learning The Value of Immersion (PDF)[311] by John Tierney

The New York Times • Tuesday, October 10, 2000

The Secret To Becoming Bilingual (PDF)[312] by John Tierney

The New York Times • Tuesday, October 17, 2000

Immersion Promoted as Alternative to Bilingual Instruction (PDF)[313]
The English Wars After Twenty-Five Years, by Ron Unz - The Unz Review

The New York Times • Tuesday, October 17, 2000
Answers to an English Question (PDF)[314]

Instead of Ending Program, New York May Offer a Choice
The New York Times • Sunday, October 22, 2000
Kids Learn Better When They’re Taught in English (PDF)[315] • Editorial

The New York Newsday • Thursday, October 24, 2000
Bilingual-Ed Study: Even Teachers Don’t Know Enough English (PDF)[316]

The New York Post • Tuesday, December 19, 2000
End, Don’t Mend, This Double-Talk (PDF)[317] • Editorial

The New York Daily News • Thursday, December 21, 2000
How New York City Avoided True Reform (PDF)[318] by Ron Unz

The New York Times • Friday, March 2, 2001
Education Hero Takes on State’s Bilingual Dragon (PDF)[319] by Andrea Peyser

The New York Post • Wednesday, April 4, 2001

Television Clips – 67m
1. News, New York One/New York, August 16, 1999[320], 3m
2. News, WABC/New York, September 12, 2000[321], 2m
3. The Big Story, WRNN/New York, September 20, 2000[322], 14m
4. News, WABC/New York, October 17, 2000[323], 3m
5. News, WCBS/New York, October 17, 2000[324], 2m
6. News, WNBC/New York, October 17, 2000[325], 2m
7. News, New York One/New York, November 14, 2000[326], 2m
8. News, WABC/New York, December 18, 2000[327], 3m
10. News, WPIX/New York, December 18, 2000[329], 2m
11. News, WNBC/New York, February 27, 2001[330], 2m
12. News, WABC/New York, February 27, 2001[331], 2m
13. News, WNBC/New York, February 27, 2001[332], 2m
15. News Weekend, New York One/New York, March 4, 2001[334], 8m
16. Close Up, New York One/New York, March 5, 2001[335], 8m
17. News, WABC/New York, July 17, 2001[336], 3m

Colorado Campaign Media, 1997-2001

Anti-Bilingual Ed Initiative Could Resurface in 2002 (PDF)[337] by Peter Blake

Denver Rocky Mountain News • Sunday, January 21, 2001
Parents Say Kids Are Denied English-Only Classes (PDF)[338]

The Denver Rocky Mountain News • Friday, March 23, 2001
DPS Bilingual Project Attacks (PDF)[339]

The Denver Post • March 23, 2001
Bilingual Ed Again Target of Activist (PDF)[340]

The Denver Post • Wednesday, March 28, 2001
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