

English

Federal government should not legislate on issue of language

In the wake of 13 state referendums about the issue of language in the past five years, the move toward making English the official tongue of the United States is gaining momentum at an alarming rate. An amendment to the Constitution declaring English the official language would have a chilling effect on not only recent immigrants, but all Americans.

A number of organizations have formed in the past few years to advocate English as the official language of the United States. The names of these groups — U.S. English, the American Ethnic Coalition — reflect the underlying tone of discrimination in their quest.

These advocates warn that the influx of Hispanics, Asians and other immigrants could create a culturally divided, bilingual country. They claim that recent immigrants are not learning English. The answer, they say, is an amendment to the Constitution making English the official language and legislation restricting rules for prospective citizens.

Immigrants to this country should be ready to accept aspects of its culture, and studies show that they are willing to do so. A survey in Florida indicated that Hispanic parents are more concerned about their children reading and writing English than non-Hispanic parents are. Most immigrants are eager to join the mainstream of American society, which happens to use the English language to communicate. It is in their own best interest to become fluent in the tongue that most people in this country speak; they do not need a law to force them to learn English because most immigrants do so voluntarily.

Furthermore, the framers of the Constitution did not include an amendment concerning an official language when they drafted the document, although at that time many people spoke languages other than English. They did not include an amendment because it was not needed. More than 200 years later, it still is not needed.

America has a rich tradition of assimilating the "huddled masses" into this land. This nation was built on immigrants, most of whom could speak little English when they arrived. Now is not the time to break from that tradition.

Making English the official language of the United States would be a slap in the face to immigrants past and present. Worse yet, such legislation could be used as a tool of discrimination and worsen ethnic tensions in this country.

Helping

University shows compassion for victims of off-campus fire

Although the university's administration is often criticized for not caring about students, it has done an excellent job helping out some USC students left homeless by a devastating fire.

The blaze, which destroyed an apartment building on Gregg Street Friday, left 11 students without a place to live. In a matter of a few minutes, these students lost almost everything they owned. They were left standing on the cold, wet street with not much more than the clothes on their backs.

The shock of what had happened must have been devastating for them.

University officials acted swiftly to help the students pick up the pieces and adjust to the crisis. They offered free temporary housing in the Towers, helped get them new ID cards and worked with the University Bookstore to replace textbooks. The university also provided pillows, sheets and other necessities to the displaced students.

Campus chaplains visited with them to offer advice and support. Neighbors offered coats and allowed the students to call home to tell their parents what had happened. Fellow students have also helped out, donating clothes and raising money. Many on campus at the time of the fire rushed to the scene to see what they could do to help.

The victims of the fire said they cannot thank everyone enough for the kindness and help they have received.

Everyone involved in helping these students deserves to be praised, especially the people at Off-Campus Student Services. The university should be commended for going above and beyond the call of duty by helping these off-campus students cope with this disaster.



Typecasting puts performers in dilemma

Whenever I see commercials that are strictly made up of actors and actresses playing parts they made famous years ago, I get a strange feeling. It's a feeling of either disgust for the advertisers or sympathy for the actors. I am not sure which.

Take Gilligan of *Gilligan's Island*. His name is Bob Denver. Everyone sees him as Gilligan. He says people on the street call him Gilligan. Whenever he is on television, he is Gilligan. It doesn't matter if he is playing another part.

I saw Denver in a movie once with Michael J. Fox where he played the father of one of the characters. He was completely different from Gilligan, but the whole time I kept thinking, "Hey, what's Gilligan doing as this guy's father?"

They call it typecasting. When actors get famous in one memorable role, people expect them to stay in that role or at least that genre forever. They get used to seeing them one way, and they can't deviate or disassociate him from that role.

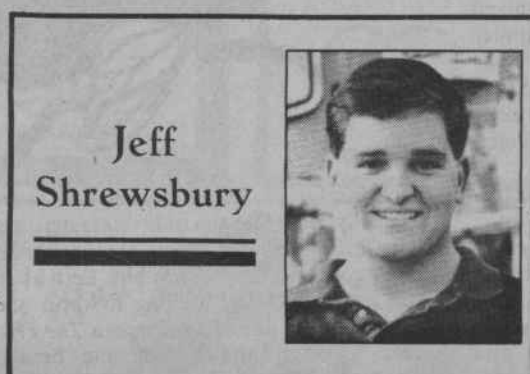
It's really not the fault of the viewers. They don't do it on purpose, but it happens just the same.

Take the tragic case of George Reeves. His story is the epitome of the typecasting problem.

Reeves played Superman in the old TV series and was tremendously famous for it. He was loved by everyone as Superman. When his show was cancelled, everyone still thought of him as Superman. He had trouble getting roles for a long time after that.

Reeves killed himself. Some who were close to him say he was distraught because he could not get work other than playing Superman.

The feeling I get now when I see old actors regurgitating their famous roles is mixed, but I



think it really stems from a feeling of sadness for them.

When I see the entire *Gilligan* cast, the cast from *Leave It To Beaver* and Grandpa from *The Munsters* doing McDonald's commercials, I laugh because I like those characters, but I cry for the actors who probably want to continue their craft and tackle other roles.

It leads me to wonder how much I would be concerned with roles I was taking if I were an actor. Would I be conscious of the roles I was taking because I didn't want to get stuck into any genre? Or would I take a role regardless, with the feeling that work is work?

It's a tough dilemma. Look at the actors who are starting to be typecast.

Bill Murray, for one, plays different roles, but they are really all the same.

Murray plays Murray cutting up and being funny in different situations in almost every movie he makes. Sure, he is a great comedic actor, but that is how he plays all his roles. He is being typecast in

those roles. When he tried to play a more serious, different role in *Razor's Edge*, the public and the critics pounded him as not being right for the part. Were they pounding him because he was wrong for the part, or were they pounding him because they were used to seeing him be funny and sarcastic?

Look at Christopher Reeves — no relation to George. Christopher has played Superman in all the four films, but he has done other work. His other films, however, have received little viewer response and bad reviews. Is that because he is a bad actor or because the public can't deal with him doing anything other than Superman?

The dilemma is understandable. They get a part at the beginning of their fame that will pay them well, and since they had probably been struggling for years to make it, they jump at it without thinking about the cinematic consequences. After their initial success, they accept a similar role because they are afraid the public will forget them. If they turn down a role, they may never get another chance.

Then all of the sudden they are typecast, regardless of their success.

Actors should not turn down roles or worry about where their success will lead them. They should take success wherever they can get it. But the critics and the rest of the world should try and remember these people are actors and can do more than one role. We should stop saying, "Hey, that's Superman. Um, Chris Reeves." We should be saying "Hey, that's Chris Reeves, the guy who played Superman."

No actor is a character, and the sooner the public starts treating him as actors, the sooner their successes will stop crushing their lives.

Letters to the editor

Armenia needs students' help

To the editor:

I am an American-Armenian student attending Rutgers University in New Jersey. As I began this new semester, I couldn't help but wonder how students in Armenia feel. Most of the students have lost loved ones and friends, and many have been injured. In addition, most of the universities in the area have been completely destroyed. It is estimated that 88 schools were leveled within three minutes on the day the earthquake hit.

No one could have predicted the earthquake. However, we can help rebuild shattered lives. In particular, I am asking that we as students organize fund-raising events for the specific purpose of rebuilding schools and universities.

Funds can be raised in many different ways. Dances, concerts and other activities can be held for the purpose of aiding the victims of the earthquake. Students can even organize a neighborhood campaign to raise money.

Since the earthquake, I have been actively involved in relief efforts organized by the Armenian General Benevolent Union. The AGBU, established in 1906, is the largest Armenian philanthropic organization in the world. AGBU's Board of Directors has pledged to spend 100 percent of all money raised to aid the victims in Armenia. Donations earmarked for a specific purpose will be used only for that purpose. Therefore, all money raised by American students will be used only for that purpose.

The cost to rebuild the shattered

region in Armenia and the lives of those affected is too large for any one nation or people to bear alone. The Armenians need our assistance. Let us think about our fellow students in Armenia who now have no schools to attend and who have questions, rather than hope, surrounding their future. Please help. Thank you.

Donations should be sent to AGBU Armenia Aid, 585 Saddle River Rd., Saddle Brook, N.J. 07662.

David Kevorkian
AGBU
Saddle Brook, N.J.

Pledging not real problem

To the editor:

This letter is written in regard to the discussion of hazing in Lynn Gibson's article titled "Fraternity leaders may ban pledging," which appeared in the Feb. 13 issue of *The Gamecock*. While it is true that hazing is a matter of growing concern among fraternal organizations and that increasing numbers of fraternities are favoring its elimination, I was dismayed to note that Gibson failed to mention Delta Upsilon in citing examples of fraternities that have taken stands against hazing.

Perhaps this oversight is understandable. After all, *The Gamecock* is a newspaper, and Delta Upsilon's stand against hazing does not really constitute news. For whereas opposition to hazing is a recent trend among fraternities, Delta Upsilon has expressly forbidden that odious tradition since the date of its

founding in 1834. Whereas other fraternities are only now beginning to realize that human dignity is sacred and should never be compromised, Delta Upsilon has known this principle since the moment of its conception and has upheld it for more than a century and a half. Delta Upsilon applauds the stands taken by Lambda Chi Alpha and Zeta Beta Tau against hazing and encourages other fraternities to do the same.

While the elimination of hazing is a worthy goal, I must, however, question the elimination of pledging as effective means toward that end. Pledging, in and of itself, is not evil. My pledgship was a completely positive experience, and it succeeded in achieving its goal of educating and preparing me for active, full-fledged membership. The evil lies in hazing during pledging; the decision to haze is a conscious and voluntary one. Delta Upsilon has pledged; we just don't haze them.

Dane Secoy
Delta Upsilon

Election codes ensure fairness

To the editor:

In regards to the article "Sign controversy delays vote count" in Friday's issue of *The Gamecock*, I wish to respond as a member of the Judiciary Committee, a senator of Student Government and, more importantly, a concerned student.

When I filed the complaint concerning Lorri Shealy and the election codes, my intentions were to stress the responsibility on any candidate's

part. It is extremely important to protect the election codes, since we must have guidelines for the activities of USC's caliber and to protect students who are in effect protected by the very same codes.

It is not my intention at all to question Shealy's integrity or her capacity to be a responsible president, nor should it be Student Affairs' intention when trying this case. To stop dwelling on the ethics and biases on everyone's part should be our main concern now, so we may work quickly and effectively on the main concern — the prevalence of these very important election codes.

The code is as follows: Neither campaign material nor individual campaigning shall be allowed within 50 feet of the poll or within the lobby of any polling precinct where voting is taking place. It was decided that "a candidate could easily interpret the code to mean that the two requirements were exclusive — not inclusive. In that case, if the poster was outside the lobby, the candidate could assume it was legal."

Why, first of all, would a candidate want to risk something this important, and secondly, this code interpreted inclusively or exclusively still renders this action illegal.

My decision to call out Shealy on this action was not based on Shealy herself, but the election codes and interpreting these codes in the favor of the students to protect them from last-minute persuasion on the way to the polls. Since the election codes violation has been made a public issue, Student Affairs has the responsibility to take action. If this situation is not properly rectified, the election codes that protect the students will be discredited.

Bunni Sanchez
Political science freshman

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