



LEGISLATIVE ALERT

ENGLISH-ONLY DRIVER EXAMS - ATTACK ON IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS OPPOSE HB 262/SB 63 and HB 2940/SB 2660

What HB 262 (Watson, E.)/SB 63 (Bunch) and HB 2940 (Carr)/ SB 2660 (Ketron) do: These bills require that all written examinations for driver licenses or intermediate driver licenses be in English.

ACLU of Tennessee opposes these bills because:

- **They do not make our streets any safer.** According to Tennessee Department of Safety testimony presented several years ago, there are no statistics that indicate that Tennessee drivers who take translated tests are less safe than those who take the exam in English. In addition, undocumented immigrants can no longer get drivers licenses in Tennessee, so HB 262/SB 63 only affect immigrants who are in this country legally.
- **They target and unfairly discriminate against people in Tennessee who can't read English.** The Spanish-speaking citizen from Puerto Rico who has relocated for a job will not be able to drive to work. The Korean grandmother who has moved to Tennessee to be with her family will not be able to drive her grandchildren to school. The German wife of a U.S. serviceman serving in Iraq will not be able to drive to the grocery store.
- **They violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.** Title VI says that "no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal funds assistance." Therefore, Title VI requires information and services to be provided in languages other than English when significant numbers of beneficiaries are of limited English speaking ability. HB 262/SB 63, which prohibit translation of driver's license exams, may violate Title VI and jeopardize federal funds received by the Tennessee Department of Safety.
- **They create an unfriendly and hostile climate for overseas businesses interested in relocating to Tennessee.** As of September 2009, Japanese investment in Tennessee exceeded \$11.7 billion and created over 35,500 jobs. However, if HB 262/SB 63 were to become law, international companies would be more inclined to go to neighboring states like Georgia and Alabama that offer drivers license exams in over ten languages.
- **They move Tennessee backward instead of forward.** These bills prohibit all translations of the written driving exam, even though the Department of Safety currently offers the test in English, Spanish, Korean and Japanese.

What you can do: Call your state senator and house representative and ask them to Vote NO on these bills. The easiest way to contact your legislators is to visit <http://www.capitol.tn.gov>, go to "Find My Legislator," put in your address and click "search."