

Submitter: Rachel Freed

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1140

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 1140, which seeks to prohibit employers from imposing requirements that employees speak only English in the workplace, unless justified by business necessity and applied in limited circumstances. While I appreciate the intention of promoting inclusivity in the workplace, I believe this legislation could lead to significant challenges for both employers and employees.

Firstly, the requirement for employers to demonstrate a "business necessity" for English-only policies may create unnecessary complications and legal hurdles. Businesses, particularly those in customer-facing roles, often need to establish clear communication standards to ensure safety, efficiency, and effective service delivery. Mandating that employers justify their language policies could hinder their ability to make operational decisions that best suit their specific needs.

Secondly, the bill could inadvertently lead to confusion and resentment among employees. In environments where English is the primary language of communication, requiring employees to speak only English can help ensure effective collaboration and minimize misunderstandings. Removing this flexibility may create an environment where employees feel uncomfortable or unsupported, ultimately affecting workplace morale and productivity.

Moreover, the legislation does not account for the diverse needs of different industries. In certain sectors, such as healthcare, hospitality, and emergency services, clear communication is crucial for safety and service quality. Allowing employers to establish language requirements based on specific circumstances is vital for maintaining operational integrity and ensuring that all employees can perform their roles effectively.

Additionally, instead of imposing restrictions on language policies, we should focus on promoting language training and resources for employees. Providing options for language development can empower workers to improve their communication skills, fostering a more inclusive and capable workforce without the need for restrictive regulations.

In conclusion, I believe SB 1140 is not the right approach. I urge you to reconsider this legislation and prioritize solutions that empower employees while allowing employers the flexibility to manage their operations effectively.