

Submitter: D Torres  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Labor and Business  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1140  
I OPPOSE SB 1140:

This proposal will have unintended negative consequences on businesses, workers, and the broader economy.

Employers should have the right to establish workplace policies that best meet the needs of their business operations. The proposed ban on English-only requirements would unnecessarily limit this flexibility. In certain industries, such as customer service, healthcare, or public safety, it may be essential for employees to communicate in English to ensure effective and accurate service delivery. Employers need the ability to require English proficiency when it directly affects the safety, productivity, or efficiency of operations. Requiring employers to justify such policies could impose unnecessary administrative burdens.

English-only policies are sometimes necessary to ensure clear communication, particularly in environments where the stakes are high. In industries such as healthcare, manufacturing, and emergency services, clear communication is critical for the safety and well-being of employees, clients, and the public. For example, requiring employees to speak English in situations that involve emergency responses, machine operation, or healthcare procedures could prevent misunderstandings that lead to safety hazards or errors. A lack of such policies might lead to costly mistakes or even endanger lives.

Small businesses, in particular, could suffer significantly from this proposal. Small business owners often operate on tight margins and limited resources. They should have the ability to set language requirements that best suit their needs and serve their customers. Prohibiting the use of English-only policies may force small businesses to navigate complex bureaucratic hurdles to justify why such policies are necessary, which could be both costly and time-consuming. In some cases, businesses may be forced to reduce the size of their workforce or even shut down if they cannot effectively communicate in the language that best serves their customers and operations.

The proposed legislation could lead to an increase in legal challenges, complaints, and litigation, as employees or advocacy groups could frequently challenge the necessity of language requirements in various workplaces. Employers would be forced to justify their policies with legal documentation or risk potential lawsuits. This creates an environment of uncertainty and increased legal exposure for employers,

which could ultimately result in higher operational costs and discourage hiring practices that are vital for economic growth.

In some cases, language requirements can be essential for businesses operating in areas with diverse communities. For example, in certain regions with a large non-English-speaking population, businesses may require employees to speak specific languages in addition to English to better serve their customer base. Employers should have the freedom to establish policies that meet the needs of their particular community and clientele without the fear of excessive regulation.

In sectors where multilingual skills are required, such as tourism, international business, and some customer-facing roles, employers may still need to emphasize proficiency in English to avoid communication breakdowns. Imposing restrictions on this would hinder employers' ability to efficiently communicate with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders, especially in environments where seamless communication is necessary for productivity.

Employers should be allowed the autonomy to make decisions that best serve their operations and the people they employ, without unnecessary interference or regulatory complexity

VOTE NO!