

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 5, 1987

Dr. Hector P. Garcia
American G.I. Forum of the U.S.
1315 Bright Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Dear Dr. Garcia:

Thank you for taking time to express your views on making English the official language of the United States. I appreciate the opportunity to review your thoughts on this issue.

Americans have had comparatively little experience with a multilingual society. English has always been the dominant language of our Nation, and it is an important part of our culture. As Americans, we are proud of the language we speak and require immigrants wishing to become citizens to adopt our native tongue.

At the same time, we have tried to find ways of more rapidly integrating new arrivals into the mainstream of American life. One way is by providing governmental forms, voting instructions, and supplemental instructions which new citizens are likely to need in multiple languages.

The Bilingual Education Program has also been a valuable bridge to developing English proficiency in non-English speaking students while permitting them to keep up in their studies of other academic subjects. English as a Second Language programs have offered similar opportunities to new immigrants.

I share your feeling for the importance of English in American culture, and I am generally supportive of the legislation to designate English as the "official" language. Indeed, I believe this is already the case since an overwhelming majority of our population uses English daily. At the same time, however, we must not lose sight of our responsibility to guarantee non-English speaking Americans the same rights as other citizens.

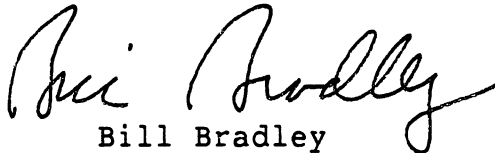
As you may know, during the 99th Congress, Senate Joint Resolution 20, designating English as the Official Language

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of the United States, was introduced, but was not debated before Congress adjourned last October. Similar legislation (S.J. Res. 13) has been introduced into the 100th Congress and has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Although I am not a member of this Committee, you can be sure that I will keep your concern in mind should this issue come up on the Senate floor.

In the meantime, I hope you will feel free to keep in touch on this or other issues of concern to you. Your comments are always welcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Bill Bradley". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names clearly legible.

Bill Bradley
United States Senator

BB/msv

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 6, 1987

Dr. Hector P. Garcia
American G.I. Forum
1315 Bright Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78405

Dear Dr. Garcia:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts with me concerning President Reagan's nomination of Judge Robert Bork to the United States Supreme Court.

The Senate has a constitutional role to play in approving or disapproving Judge Bork's nomination to the Supreme Court. This particular appointment presents the Senate with one of the most important Senate confirmations we will have for a long time.

Having now examined the record thoroughly, I must in good conscience vote against Judge Bork's confirmation when it comes before the full Senate. In assessing Judge Bork's nomination, I have made my decision based on what I believe to be the best interests of both the nation and the state of Ohio.

Without question, Judge Bork is a brilliant legal scholar. But in a number of important areas, I do not believe that Judge Bork's views reflect the values of most Americans and indeed of most Ohioans. For example:

o Individual Rights -- A primary role of the Supreme Court is to actively protect the fundamental rights of all Americans. In Judge Bork's view, the Court is limited to the exact wording of the Constitution in defending individual liberties -- nothing more, nothing less. But in some cases it is uncertain what the framer's intent was, or might be, in light of changing customs, morals, mores, and ethics now generally accepted by most Americans.

o Civil Rights -- The legislation passed in the 1960s to guarantee the rights of black Americans was a long overdue remedy to decades of slavery and oppression. In Judge Bork's view, the legislation constituted "an extraordinary incursion into individual freedom." While black Americans were fighting for the right to sit at lunch counters and to stay in hotels with white Americans, Judge Bork was criticizing the Public Accommodations Civil Rights Act of 1964.

o Women's Rights -- The courts have an important role to play in protecting women against discrimination. In Judge Bork's view, cases of sex discrimination should not receive heightened scrutiny under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment. Consider how much worse off our mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters would be if Judge Bork's views had prevailed.

o Privacy -- Judge Bork has stated that a right of privacy cannot be derived from the Constitution. Specifically, Bork disagrees with the Supreme Court's decision in Griswold v. Connecticut, in which the Court found a right to privacy in the context of a married couple's use of contraceptives. Clearly, this view jeopardizes all subsequent Supreme Court rulings predicated upon a privacy right.

o Congressional Access to the Courts -- Judge Bork has ruled that Members of Congress have no standing to sue the executive branch in court. Under his view, Congress as an entity could not challenge the constitutionality of the executive branch's actions in the Iran-contra affair, nor could individual Members have challenged the constitutionality of the Gramm-Rudman law.

o "One man, one vote" -- Judge Bork opposes this Supreme Court ruling, stating that the principle runs counter to the text of the Fourteenth Amendment. Judge Bork also opposes the Supreme Court's decision upholding the authority of Congress to curb the use of literacy tests in order to protect the right to vote.

Not surprisingly, Judge Bork's views on these and other issues have caused great concern on the part of many Americans. Public opinion polls have consistently shown that the large majority of Americans who are familiar with the nomination are opposed to Judge Bork's confirmation.

The promise and the greatness of the American dream has always rested on the high value we place on the rights of the individual. We are not the only country in the world to use majority rule, but no other Constitution protects the fundamental human rights of individuals the way ours does.

In protecting human rights, our Supreme Court has become the historic guardian of individual liberty. Consequently, when I see that Judge Bork would have allowed states to ban contraceptives, to require voters to pay a poll tax, to enforce restrictive covenants, to outlaw abortion, and to

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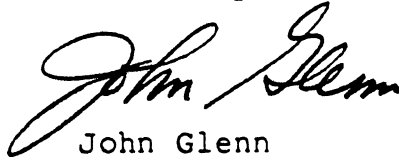
sterilize prison inmates against their will, it is clear to me that his vision of human rights for individual Americans is far different both from the Court's and from my own.

In short, I believe that most Americans and most Ohioans, including myself, see Judge Bork as falling outside the mainstream of American jurisprudence that they seek both for the benefit of their children and for a stronger America; that is why I oppose his confirmation.

I appreciate having the benefit of your views.

Best regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John Glenn". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first and last names clearly legible.

John Glenn
United States Senator

JG/kd