



Language, Dress of Thought

Published on *Show-Me Institute* (<https://showmeinstitute.org>)



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The English-language cartel is pushing for more [regulations](#) :

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- The House voted Wednesday to require commercial drivers be able to communicate in English and take their certification test without translators to get their licenses.

Commercial truck drivers would also need to show they can read highway signs, fill out forms and respond to official inquiries, such as about what they are hauling.

The purpose of this legislation is to make it harder for foreigners to get work as truck drivers, which would limit the number of available truck drivers and raise the wages of Americans who hold this job.

"Filling out forms" for the government can be confusing even if English is your native

language. Requiring technical writing skills will bar a lot of hard-working legal immigrants from employment. Sure, it could be inconvenient if a policeman pulls over a truck driver who doesn't know much English. There are a million other situations in which not knowing English would be inconvenient, which is why most people in this country speak English. But a law requiring truck drivers, yard work guys, or garbage collectors to speak English isn't going to do much to improve the efficiency of our legal system or labor markets.

This legislation is unfair to people who had the misfortune not to be native English speakers. It's also silly. Languages evolve naturally, so in the long run it's futile to legislate about them. The English we speak is not the same as the English spoken today in [Britain](#) or the English that was spoken by [Shakespeare](#). And English isn't the same in all parts of our own country. For example, in Missouri I sometimes hear women address each other as "lady". Try that north of Springfield, Illinois and you'll get some strange looks.

The legislation also leaves an important question unresolved. Should we require truck drivers to say "Missouri" or "Missourah"?

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Advancing liberty with responsibility by promoting market solutions for Missouri public policy.

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