Spanish Language Immersion Programs in Public Schools?”

Should we be concerned about Spanish language immersion programs in public schools? Our system just started one, offering Spanish-only kindergarten and first grade classes. Am I just an alarmist or is this just another ploy to undermine our sovereignty?

Thank you for your e-mail. I have noticed that some states (like North Carolina) are implementing a Spanish language immersion program like Los Puentes. On its face, it is probably a good idea since children learn language so much easier when they are younger. So I don’t think there is anything to be concerned about English-speaking students learning Spanish at a young age.

That being said, there are concerns people have raised about bilingual education that does not put Spanish speaking kids into the mainstream. Recently I had a guest on my radio program who was responsible for some of this (in particular he was the reason all ballots are in both English and Spanish).

Also, the Rand Corporation released a study that documented the costs for language assistance instruction programs. They found that the total per pupil costs was estimated to be in the range of $460 to $1,600 in 2007 dollars. The total cost was $3.9 billion.

Bilingual education has been expensive, and it doesn’t seem to help Spanish-speaking students. It tends to isolate them rather than integrate them.

Thanks for writing.

Kerby Anderson

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