

English Plus Declaration in New Mexico

State declarations of Official English produced a counter-trend: legislative endorsement of English Plus. In March 1989, at the urging of the New Mexico State Task Force on Modern and Classical Languages, the New Mexico legislature adopted House Joint Memorial 16, a nonbinding resolution "Supporting Language Rights in the United States." It thus became the first state to adopt an English Plus resolution, soon followed by Oregon and Washington State.

WHEREAS the people of New Mexico promote the spirit of diversity-with-harmony represented by the various cultures that make up the fabric of our state and American society; and

WHEREAS the people of New Mexico acknowledge that "English Plus" best serves the national interest since it promotes the concept that all members of our society have full access to opportunities to effectively learn English plus develop proficiency in a second or multiple languages; and

WHEREAS the people of New Mexico recognize that the position of English in the United States needs no official legislation to support it; and

WHEREAS the people of New Mexico recognize that for survival in the twenty-first century our country needs both the preservation of the cultures and languages among us and the fostering of proficiency in other languages on the part of its citizens;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED ... that the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature of the State of New Mexico hereby reaffirms its advocacy of the teaching of other languages in the United States and its belief that the position of English is not threatened. Proficiency on the part of our citizens in more than one language is to the economic and cultural benefit of our state and the nation, whether that proficiency derives from second language study by English speakers or from home language maintenance plus English acquisition by speakers of other languages. Proficiency in English plus other languages should be encouraged throughout the State.