

Senate
Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs
Hon. Jon Sonju
63rd Montana State Legislature
Capitol Building
Helena, Montana

February 14, 2013

RE: Senate Bill 255 "Repeal English as Official Language of Business"

Mr. Chair and Committee Members:

Hello my name is Shane Morigeau. That is spelled M-O-R-I-G-E-A-U. I am here today on behalf of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) in support of SB 255. Restricting the official language to English is a xenophobic act, which is out of touch with modern culture and modern business.

The CSKT believe in economic development for our Tribes and the State of Montana. One of the primary drivers of economic development in Montana is trade with outside countries. For example, SJ 11 is a bill up this session sponsored by Senator Dee Brown. This bill's initiative is to establish a trade center in Canada. One of the primary languages in Canada is French. Having English as the official language contradicts our efforts to attract trade and business with outside countries, like Canada. We clearly send the wrong message by restricting the official language to English only.

Many of you may know that Montana participates in hiring international workers at Glacier Park every year. Many of these international workers speak a different language. Having English as primary language contradicts our efforts in bringing in these international workers. In return we limit Montana's opportunities for positive relations with outside countries and restrict our opportunity to diversify Montanans cultural exposure.

English may be our primary language, but it is not our official language, and it is not our only language. Tribes across Montana speak traditional languages. Tribes across the state do business with Montana in a variety of contexts. Having English as the official language of business sends the wrong message on business relations with Tribes. If Montana wants to be on a global economy, we need to pass SB 255. The CSKT support this bill and urge this committee to vote yes on SB 255 and give the bill your full support.

Thank you,



Shane Morigeau
CSKT Tribal Lobbyist