

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 15, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Pamela J. Bondi  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear President Trump and Attorney General Bondi:

We write to express our deep concern regarding President Trump's and the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) continued attack on language access with your July 14, 2025, release of guidance<sup>1</sup> to implement President Trump's Executive Order (EO) 14224.<sup>2</sup>

President Trump does not have the authority to declare English as the national language. The issue of a national language has been debated in Congress, and the legislative branch has not made such an establishment. In bypassing Congress with his declaration, the President continues to flout the constitution's checks and balances. Similarly, in this guidance, the Attorney General falsely claims that *Lau v. Nichols* has been overturned, directly contradicting previous rulings by federal judges and the Supreme Court, which have determined discrimination against people with limited English proficiency (LEP) amounts to discrimination on the basis of national origin.

The memorandum in itself raises significant legal, operational, and civil rights concerns by treating language access as discretionary, which undermines guarantees under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The memo attempts to roll back decades of progress and weakens the legal framework to combat national origin discrimination by treating language access as an unnecessary privilege rather than a civil right. The new DOJ guidance will create uncertainty and confusion across federal agencies and will lead to millions of people with LEP being denied access to critical, life-sustaining services.

Over 25.7 million individuals in the United States – more than 8% of the U.S. population – are LEP and rely on translation and interpretation services to access vital public services and institutions, including health care, the legal system, education, housing, and employment.<sup>3</sup> In August 2000, President Clinton signed EO 13166, which required federal agencies meet the needs of LEP individuals and develop guidance that clarifies language accessibility obligations

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<sup>1</sup> [AG Bondi Memo: Implementation of Executive Order No. 14224 Designating English as the Official Language of the United States of America](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Federal Register: Designating English as the Official Language of the United States](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Language Access for Individuals with Limited English Proficiency | U.S. Commission on Civil Rights](#)

for recipients of federal assistance. EO 13166 also built upon Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination based on national origin.<sup>4</sup> Federal courts and agencies have recognized that failing to provide language access constitutes national origin discrimination. While the DOJ can provide guidance to federal agencies around their language obligations, it cannot absolve recipients of federal funding of their obligations under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act, and other civil rights legislation and statutes that require recipients of federal funding to ensure meaningful access to their programs for people with limited English proficiency.

Translation and interpretation services can be the difference between life and death. In 2021, a Spanish-speaking family in Mayfield, Kentucky survived a deadly tornado only because they received a Spanish-language alert moments before their home was destroyed.<sup>5</sup> In 2020, a woman with coronavirus symptoms died in New York after emergency room staffers could not communicate with her in Hungarian.<sup>6</sup> In 2023, a Navajo man died in a New Mexico hospital because he was denied an interpreter.<sup>7</sup> And just this month, a deaf Mongolian asylum-seeker in California, who has faced discrimination and physical attacks in his own country due to his disability, was finally released from immigration custody after being unable to communicate for six months in court because he was denied access to a Mongolian Sign Language interpreter.<sup>8</sup>

Additionally, we are concerned that this guidance is already having negative impacts. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), in an effort to comply with EO 14224, is considering eliminating non-English language tax services such as translated documents and phone and in-person interpretation.<sup>9</sup> When taxpayers cannot understand IRS forms, they are more likely to make mistakes or avoid filing altogether. Cutting multilingual resources will not save money; they will instead cost the U.S. significant revenue loss in unpaid taxes. We are also concerned about DOJ's removal of many language access resources, including LEP.gov which has provided data and best practices to agencies and funded entities for many years.<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, we request answers to the following inquiries to ensure that your administration is upholding its obligations under Title VI and protecting language accessibility for Americans with LEP. We further request answers to the questions in the attached April 11, 2025 letter, which has not yet received a response.

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<sup>4</sup> [USCODE-2010-title42-chap21-subchapV.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> [NWS no longer translating products for non-English speakers — AP News](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Hospitals Have Left Many COVID-19 Patients Who Don't Speak English Alone, Confused and Without Proper Care — ProPublica](#)

<sup>7</sup> [A Navajo family claims in a lawsuit that a hospital's failure to provide a language interpreter contributed to an elder's misdiagnosis, death — abqjournal.com](#)

<sup>8</sup> [ICE releases deaf Mongolian immigrant from 4-month detention — CalMatters](#)

<sup>9</sup> [IRS considers cutting non-English tax services — The Washington Post](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Civil Rights Division | Limited English Proficiency — Department of Justice](#)

1. How does DOJ define “necessary,” “unnecessary,” and “non-essential” in regard to multilingual services, and what standards or criteria will the DOJ use to determine which non-English services are “unnecessary” and/or “non-essential”?
  - a. What standards or criteria will agencies use to determine whether a program “serves the public at large better if operated exclusively in English”?
  - b. Once the internal inventory is completed, please provide a comprehensive inventory of all “unnecessary” or “non-essential” multilingual services the DOJ intends to phase out, and the rationale for each.
2. The memo states that the DOJ’s implementation of Executive Order 14224 will be “cost effective[,] reducing administrative burdens and costs, enhancing operational efficiency across agencies.”
  - a. Please provide this cost analysis, including the current annual LEP translation spending, and the projected cost to implement EO 14224.
  - b. Please detail any contracts for the provision of language services that have been cancelled since January 20, 2025.
3. The memo encourages all agencies to “use technology to save costs” and to specifically utilize “technological advances in translation services” including “artificial intelligence and machine translation” to communicate with LEP individuals.
  - a. What procedures are in place to ensure that AI and machine translation tools used by federal agencies meet acceptable standards of accuracy and cultural competence?
4. The memo states that LEP and translation services resources funds will be “redirecting... toward research and programs that improve English proficiency and assimilation”.
  - a. What specific parameters and oversight mechanisms will govern the redirection of federal funds toward English-language acquisition and assimilation programs?
  - b. What metrics will DOJ use to measure the effectiveness of these programs?
  - c. Which DOJ components have the expertise in English language teaching or assimilation programming to lead or fund such programs?
  - d. Please detail any programs that provide English language skills training and education that have been cut, had funding withheld, or seen staff reductions since January 20, 2025.
5. The memo states that “English is the official language and authoritative version of all federal information”.
  - a. What authority does the President and Department of Justice have to declare that English is the official language?
  - b. In cases where translation errors cause confusion or miscommunication, what protocols are in place to resolve disputes when the English version is deemed the “authoritative” version?
  - c. What remedies will exist for LEP individuals if discrepancies arise between translations and the English version?
6. Federal offices of civil rights are responsible for ensuring that recipients of federal funding comply with their obligations under the law. When someone submits a complaint to a federal office for civil rights alleging they were denied meaningful access to a

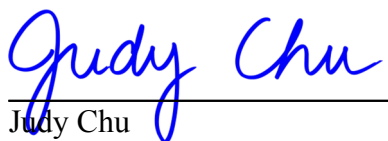
federally funded program in their primary language, how will that complaint be addressed under this new guidance?

7. The memorandum acknowledges that Title II of the Americans with Disability Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require effective communication for individuals with disabilities. How will DOJ ensure any reduction in LEP services does not conflict with obligations under these statutes?

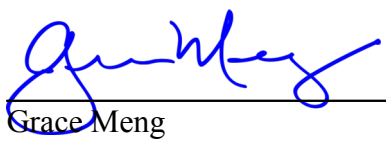
EO 14224 and the guidance outlined in Attorney General Bondi's memo threaten to cause significant harm to millions of LEP Americans by limiting their access to essential federal services and undermining longstanding civil rights protections. These changes risk creating confusion, denying critical information, and exacerbates disparities in health, safety, and justice.

We demand clear answers on how DOJ will prevent these harmful outcomes and ensure that language access remains a right—not a privilege—for all Americans. We look forward to your timely response to this important matter.

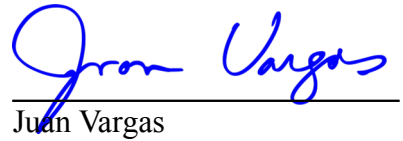
Sincerely,




Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



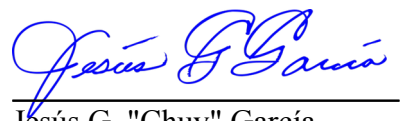
Grace Meng  
CAPAC Chair



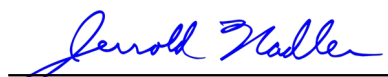
Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



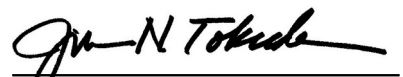
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
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Lateefah Simon  
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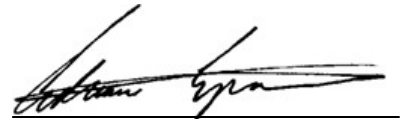
MARK TAKANO  
Member of Congress



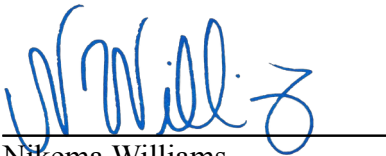
Dave Min  
Member of Congress



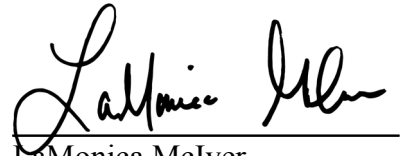
Ted W. Lieu  
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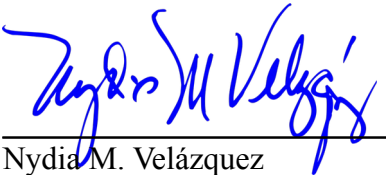
Adriano Espaillat  
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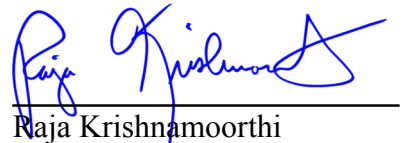
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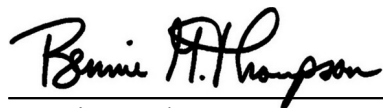
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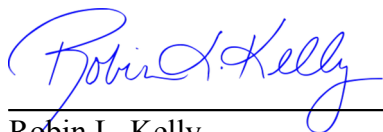
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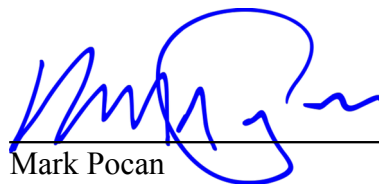
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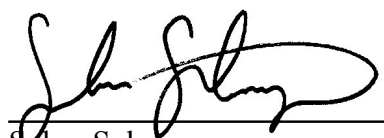
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Sylvia R. Garcia  
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Suhas Subramanyam  
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Julia Brownley  
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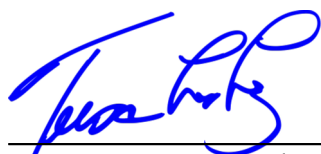
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Madeleine Dean  
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Teresa Leger Fernández  
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Dwight Evans  
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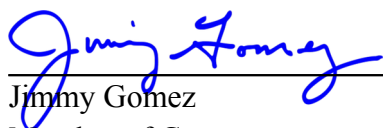
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Member of Congress



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Jimmy Gomez  
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Maxine Dexter  
Member of Congress



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Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress