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## VOICES/Do we need a law making English the official language of the USA?



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Yes. English has been the predominant language and should be the official mother tongue of the United States. We need one common thread. Although living in a melting pot has its benefits, we need one thing to unite the country. Language is the most important facet in achieving this goal.

No. Why throw a gratuitous insult at millions of Hispanic citizens? We levy no such law against Americans from other places who now make up the so-called melting pot. We need no such law aimed at Hispanics. They will learn and use English when they find that that is one key to success in this society.

Yes. When you're in Rome, you do as the Romans do. When you're in the United States, you do as the people of the United States do. I think a law will force people to learn the language. When you go to a public bathroom, the word "ladies" is in a half-dozen languages. Why should we need that?

Definitely not. People should be encouraged to learn English through the democratic system. A law just lends itself to racist abuses. We've seen the problem in states where there's a large Hispanic population, and it's been an attempt in my mind to limit their access to political and economic power.

I don't think so. Technically, everybody should learn to speak and understand English if they want to survive in this country. But we don't need a law for them to do that. We've been surviving this long without one and, besides, how is a law going to make people learn to speak the language?

Yes, we do. If we're all going to live in the United States, we should all speak the same language. Maybe a law will give people more incentive to want to learn to speak English. I think that speaking the same language gives people the feeling that they belong — it gives them a sense of unity.

## FACE-OFF: SMOKING AND HEALTH

### Doctors should reject tobacco money

By Alan Blum  
 Guest columnist

HOUSTON — Leo Rosten defines chutzpah as the child who murders his parents, then throws himself on the mercy of the court as an orphan.

For corporate chutzpah, however, it's hard to top RJR Nabisco, which touts its Fleischmann's margarine as a protector against heart disease while continuing to reap fat profits from its many cigarette brands, like Winston and Camel. Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of heart disease and cancer, according to every major health authority, including the American Medical Association and American Academy of Family Physicians.

Hence the irony last week of RJR Nabisco boasting of its sponsorship of the AMA's campaign against cholesterol and providing free breakfast for 2,000 family physicians at a national meeting in Dallas, while the same company was proudly promoting its youth-oriented Winston drag races, its massive new cigarette shipments to the Soviet Union and its discount coupons in the Sunday papers for Camel that feature a cartoon animal character named Old Joe, recognized by millions of children.

Although 9 out of 10 persons who smoke start before age 18, many politicians still fall for Tobacco Institute propaganda that this is due to peer pressure and choose to ignore the blitzkrieg of cigarette advertisements bom-



*Alan Blum is a family physician and founder of Doctors Ought to Care.*

barding our kids. Some people even believe that criticism of the industry should be toned down because it is diversifying into non-tobacco products. Nonsense! In fact, profits from cigarette sales remain the foundation of RJR Nabisco and other tobacco companies.

Faced with thousands of medical reports indicting cigarettes as the most important cause of heart disease and cancer, tobacco companies have had to create a new identity. They have dropped "tobacco" from their names, grabbed

food companies through hostile takeovers and remain the largest and most influential advertisers on TV.

Feeling their oats, tobacco companies try to curry favor with medical organizations by paying the bills for breakfast or offering cash for campaigns against cholesterol in an effort to undermine the importance of smoking as the major culprit in heart disease.

Switching from butter to margarine is of negligible benefit for the person who keeps smoking or the teenager who takes it up. Medical societies shouldn't permit tobacco companies to provide their bread and butter. Haven't we learned by now, there's no free breakfast?

### Don't reject money that does good

By Harry Schwartz  
 Guest columnist

SCARSDALE, N.Y. — A small group of fanatics is trying to convince us that there is such a thing as tainted money which should be shunned by all decent people. The money in question is any that comes directly or indirectly from tobacco companies, and we are instructed to shun these tainted dollars even if they are being used for the purpose of advancing health.

Fortunately, it takes only a modest amount of thought to see how really unreasonable this position is.

For one thing, if taken literally, this off-the-wall ideology would require the end of the National Institutes of Health and all the important medical research it sponsors. Hundreds of millions of dollars in federal taxes are paid by tobacco companies annually. So every NIH grant is partially paid for with the tainted money the fanatics deplore. Yet, obviously, NIH work should not be stopped. A more sensible view is that we want a cure for cancer and for heart disease, regardless of who pays for the needed research.

But to see how really bizarre and irrational this doctrine of tainted money is, one needs only think of its full implications. Surely, if one believes, with the extremists, that tobacco-tainted money should not even be used to advance the nation's health, then certainly it should not



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be employed for more mundane purposes.

Consider a tobacco worker in Winston-Salem, N.C., or some other town where tobacco products are made. Should anyone accept that worker's dollars for any purpose? Should grocers sell him or her food? Should landlords accept tobacco dollars for rent? Should doctors accept such money for fees?

Seen in this light, the fanatics of DOC are really calling on the rest of us effectively to lynch everybody connected with the tobacco industry, to refuse to sell them food, clothing, recreation, housing, health care, dental services, college education or anything else.

Behind the doctrine of tainted money is the demand that thousands of our fellow citizens be declared outside the pale, enemies of the people.

And once this goal is attained, of course, DOC's crazies will move to widen the number of lynch victims. Isn't money from the wine and liquor industry tainted? From magazines and newspapers that run cigarette ads? Etc., etc. The possibilities boggle the mind.