

AZTESOL Position Statement

Support for HB 2281 and HB 2435

Arizona Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (AZTESOL) is a professional organization in Arizona for educators and researchers interested in learning theory and teaching methods that are effective with English learners (ELs). Our organization encompasses practitioners at all teaching levels including K-12, community college, university, intensive English programs, and adult education, as well as researchers and graduate students at our state's public and private universities. We are deeply concerned with the Senate's halt of HB 2281 and HB 2435, bills that would allow English learners to spend two hours of their school day focusing on learning English and enroll in dual language programs, rather than the four-hour block of English immersion currently required.

The bills have support from a variety of business and education groups including the Arizona Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Arizona Education Association, the Arizona Charter School Association, and the Arizona School Board Association, which say the change would help improve academic outcomes for Arizona's English language learners. The bills are reportedly on hold due to Senate President Steve Yarbrough, who is single-handedly stalling the bills. He was a part of the original group that developed the 4-hour SEI block, and he told reporters that the almost 20-year old model is working "just fine" and doesn't need to be changed. We do not agree with this statement, as evidenced by data related to the education of English learners in the state of Arizona and studies completed by the Office of Civil Rights and Arizona state reports.¹ The bills passed the House of Representatives on a 56-1 vote and cleared the Senate Education Committee unanimously. To let the Senate know that people are paying attention and not willing to let one person kill bills that have been supported in a bi-partisan manner so far, please join us in filling their inboxes in support of our language learners.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- Click [HERE](#) to find your congressional and legislative district numbers.
- Click [HERE](#) to find the 2 senators for your district by clicking on Senate Roster.
- E-mail your 2 senators twice, one for each bill. Feel free to use the templates below.
- E-mail Senate President Yarbrough who is the one trying to kill the bills by not putting them on the final agenda. Our purpose now is to fill their in boxes so they realize this is important and people are paying attention.

¹ Arizona Department of Education (2011). Arizona English Language learner Program: Report highlights special study. Retrieved from https://www.azauditor.gov/sites/default/files/ELL_Highlights.pdf

Gandara, P., & Hopkins, M. (2010). *Forbidden Language: English Learners and restrictive language policies*. New York, New York: Teachers College Press.

Krashen, S., Rolstad, K. & MacSwan, J. (2011). Research summary and bibliography for Structured English Immersion programs of the Arizona English Language Learners Task Force. In C. Faltis & B. Arias (eds.) *English Learners in Arizona*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Lillie, K. (2015). The lost generation: students of Arizona's structured English Immersion. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 19(4), 408-425

MacSwan, J., & Rolstad, K. (2011). Impact of Proposition 203 on student progress. In G. McField (ed.) *Appropriate Action: English Learners in U.S. Schools*. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Resolution Agreement: Among the Arizona Department of Education, The U.S. Department of Education's Office for civil rights (Denver), and The U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division (2012). Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/investigations/08064006-b.pdf>

Email #1: Support for HB 2435

Dear Senator _____ (insert your Senator's last name),

Please urge Senate President Yarbrough to allow HB 2435 to be heard on the Senate floor. Arizona children classified as English learners cannot face another year with the unsuccessful model of the 4-hour SEI block. Today's facts speak for themselves:

- AZ English learners spend 4 hours of their day in English Language development with only an hour and 15 minutes for all other content area instruction (Math, Science, Social Studies).
- Arizona has the lowest reclassification rate in the country of 16 percent.
- English learners in Arizona have the highest dropout rates.
- Arizona teachers are restricted to use only the 4-hour SEI block model to teach English learners English.
- Arizona teachers are restricted from using highly effective researched-based models to teach English.

This bill allows education in Arizona to be more progressive in order to produce students who will contribute to the future of Arizona. Please ensure the best programs for the students of Arizona by supporting this bill.

Email #2: Support for HB 2281

Dear Senator _____ (insert your Senator's last name),

Please urge Senate President Yarbrough to allow HB 2281 to be heard on the Senate floor. Arizona children classified as English learners cannot be denied entry to dual language immersion programs anymore. We live in a state that encourages parent choice but doesn't allow parents of English learners to enroll in dual language immersion programs.

Passage of HB 2281 would allow this inequity to stop, giving access to high-quality programs using best practices for promoting both language development and academic achievement to all of Arizona's children.