

The couple returned to Fresno to raise their daughters in the community James affectionately called home. It was during this time that Mr. A began noticing physical problems that later resulted in his paraplegia. He was diagnosed with a neurological condition and as a result of this he was forced to use a wheelchair. Ever the active sole, Mr. A participated in wheelchair basketball and wheelchair races as a way of not letting his illness beat him.

Mr. A used his experience with misfortune to lend a helping hand to others. He waged a personal campaign for veterans in Fresno and in the state of California. James A helped to establish the Vietnam Veteran Monument in Woodward Park. He was also involved with the effort to establish the California Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Sacramento. Mr. A worked with the Bay Area Western Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America and in 2005 he served as its Vice President.

In 2002, Mr. A was diagnosed with lung cancer and was in remission until January of 2005. Determined to be a shining example for his family, despite all of the physical challenges he faced, James A continued to serve his community.

James A is survived by his wife Edith; two daughters Sabine and her husband Asker and Sonja and her husband Andrew; grandchildren Ilkin, Timur, Emily and Rebecca; two sisters and two brothers.

James A cared deeply about advocating for veterans. His warm and compassionate personality which inspired those around him will be missed deeply. I stand today to honor this noble veteran, who served our country not only as a soldier but also as a citizen.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO "TANTE"
GERTRUDE ZAHNER

HON. JON C. PORTER

OF NEVADA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor "Tante" Gertrude Zahner on her 100th birthday.

Gertrude was born in Stuttgart Germany on June 15, 1906. She had three brothers and was the only daughter in the Zahner family. In 1923, when Gertrude was 17 years old the family moved to the United States. Gertrude worked for a number of years at the Ford plant in Michigan. She greatly enjoyed her tenure with the company and even worked for Mr. and Mrs. Henry Ford in their home. In 1979 Gertrude's service to the Ford family ended with her retirement.

Gertrude loved actively participating with her friends in the "Women's Guild", the "German Society", and the "Card Club" while she was living in Detroit. Every year several of the ladies in the "Card Club" would make a journey with her to Las Vegas, where Gertrude had a number of family members. In 1990, Gertrude moved to the greater Las Vegas area to be closer to her family. She has one nephew, Horst Maile, and a niece-in-law, Elfriede Maile. Gertrude is also god-mother to Rolf and Marvin, her grand-nephews.

Mr. Speaker, I am proud to honor "Tante" Gertrude Zahner on her 100th birthday. I wish her many more years of happiness with her family.

DIVISIVE IN ANY LANGUAGE

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commend E.J. Dionne Jr. for his recent article published in the Washington Post entitled, "Divisive In Any Language", in which it describes how the argument surrounding the English Language can become more of a tool to divide instead of unify.

It is my belief that all who seek to enter our borders understand the vital importance of learning English, for it is the path to any route of social mobility. The immigrants of the past have understood the importance of learning English just as those who come today do. English must not be seen as a barrier to upward mobility, but as an extremely useful device that opens up the doors to opportunity.

This "American Dream" that we speak of so often seems to now be under fire from those who have made the dream a reality, or who are the beneficiaries of a dream sought many years ago by their forbearers. It is now those who have since benefited from the "American Dream" who seek to shut the door on the hopes and aspirations of others.

To create amendments in our laws and especially in the Senate immigration bill that explicitly say that English is the language of this land will indeed be disrespectful to our current large population of Spanish-speaking members. Dionne pointedly says this will be "legally and formally" disrespectful in a way earlier generations of immigrants from—just a partial list—Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Norway, Sweden, France, Hungary, Greece, and China" were not.

I acknowledge my fellow colleague in the United States Senate, KEN SALAZAR from Colorado for his realistic approach to this divisive ordeal. He declared that, "English is the common and unifying language of the United States" while also insisting on the existing rights of non-English speakers "to services or materials provided by the government" in languages other than English".

Senator SALAZAR knows that the key to settling the issue is not by imposing restrictions and making amendments on people who speak English as a second language, primarily Spanish speakers. Our job here today is to get others to see the light, and to understand the real issue at hand.

I enter into the RECORD the Washington Post article by E.J. Dionne Jr. for presenting this issue regarding the use of the English language with a personal perspective. Being brought up in a home where English is not the only language spoken, he knows firsthand the plight of the other side. More of us need to understand and put ourselves in the shoes of those we have come to discriminate against. Let us use English to bring ourselves closer together, for if it is the only common bond we have why not use it. It is in the best interest of this Nation to get this issue settled efficiently, and accordingly.

[From the Washington Post, May 23, 2006]

DIVISIVE IN ANY LANGUAGE

(By E. J. Dionne Jr.)

Yes, let's talk about the English language and how important it is that immigrants and their children learn it.

And please permit me to be personal about an issue that is equally personal to the tens of millions of Americans who remember their immigrant roots.

My late father was born in the United States, and grew up in French Canadian neighborhoods in and around New Bedford, Mass. When he started school, he spoke English with a heavy accent. A first-grade teacher mercilessly made fun of his command of the language.

My dad would have none of this and proceeded to relearn English, with some help from a generous friend named James Radcliffe who, in turn, asked my dad to teach him French. My dad came to speak flawless, accent-free English. He and my mom insisted that their children speak our nation's language clearly, and without grammatical errors.

None of this caused my parents to turn against their French heritage. On the contrary, my sister and I were taught French before we were taught English because my parents took pride in the language of our forebears and knew that speaking more than one language would be a useful skill.

My mom would give free French lessons at our Catholic parochial school to any kid who wanted to take them. When we were young, we'd visit our cousins on a farm in Quebec during the summer, partly to improve our French. (And Parisian French elitists take note: I still love the much-derided accent of the Quebec countryside, which many have compared to the English of the Tennessee mountains.) I tell you all this by way of explaining why I can't stand the demagoguery directed against immigrants who speak languages other than English. Raging against them shows little understanding of how new immigrants struggle to become loyal Americans who love their country—and come to love the English language.

As it considered the immigration bill last week, the Senate passed an utterly useless amendment sponsored by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) declaring English to be our "national language" and calling for a government role in "preserving and enhancing" the place of English.

There is no point to this amendment except to say to members of our currently large Spanish-speaking population that they will be legally and formally disrespected in a way that earlier generations of immigrants from—this is just a partial list—Germany, Italy, Poland, Russia, Norway, Sweden, France, Hungary, Greece, China, Japan, Finland, Lithuania, Lebanon, Syria, Bohemia, Slovakia, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia were not.

Immigrants from all these places honored their origins, built an ethnic press and usually worshiped in the languages of their ancestors. But they also learned English because they knew that advancement in our country required them to do so.

True, we now have English-as-a-Second-Language programs that have created some resentments and, in the eyes of their critics, can slow the transition from Spanish to English. Still, the evidence is overwhelming that Spanish speakers and their kids are as aware as anyone of the importance of learning English. That's why we have an attorney general named Gonzales, senators named Salazar, Martinez and Menendez, and a mayor of Los Angeles named Villaraigosa.

Ken Salazar, a Colorado Democrat, introduced an alternative amendment to Inhofe's that also passed the Senate. It declared English the "common and unifying language of the United States" while also insisting on the existing rights of non-English speakers "to services or materials provided by the government" in languages other than English. As Salazar understands, the best