

ProEnglish

Anything but innocuous, ProEnglish is an organization that does as its name describes, relentlessly promoting legislation and policies that favor English as the official language of the United States. It feebly contends the relevance of “Official English,” from parading the immigrants who agree with its cause to arguing that most other countries retain a national language. But while ProEnglish would like to convince Americans that its agenda is practical and uncontroversial, this could not be farther from the truth.

ProEnglish was established in 1994 with the oversight of its founding chairman, the white nationalist John Tanton. In fact, it is Tanton’s second English language interest group, formed after he left the first, U.S. English, after a racially charged memo that surfaced in 1988. For his part, Tanton is credited as the chief architect of the contemporary anti-immigrant movement, having founded, funded, or otherwise supported a constellation of nativist groups. These beneficiaries, known collectively as the John Tanton Network, have become notorious for their numerous collaborations with white nationalists and ethnic separatists—even going so far as to employ a few for themselves—in addition to their frequent exhibitions of unmitigated racism.

As a part of this alliance, ProEnglish operates under U.S., Inc., the Network’s financial umbrella, which acts as its parent organization. KC McAlpin, the group’s longtime executive director, left in 2010 to become John Tanton’s right-hand man as president at U.S., Inc. As board members, both men continue to shape ProEnglish’s undertakings. And, like the rest of the Network, ProEnglish participates in the bigotry endemic to a nativist agenda.

By faulting a “pluralistic” excess in this country, ProEnglish seeks to “unite” the United States by trampling the rights of minorities. From outlawing the use of multiple languages on government forms, to eliminating bilingual education in grammar schools, ProEnglish merely seeks to encumber the lives of non-native speakers and symbolically exude its nativist definition of “American.”

- In a 1997 interview published in the Detroit Free Press, Tanton provided a glimpse into his well-documented history of callousness towards immigrants, famously claiming that they enter the country “defecating and creating garbage and looking for jobs.”
- ProEnglish board member Phil Kent is the vice president of the anti-immigrant group American Immigration Control Foundation, run by John Vinson. Vinson has argued that “[m]ulticulturalism [...] subordinates successful Euro-American culture to dysfunctional Third World cultures” in a 1998 issue of The Social Contract, a white nationalist journal also founded by Tanton.
- Board member KC McAlpin, who also contributes to The Social Contract, defended that publication’s call to ban all Muslim immigration into the United States. Claiming that Congress would be well within its rights to do so, McAlpin stated that such moratoriums had been implemented “to ban the immigration of Communist Party and National Socialist (Nazi) party members who were deemed to be threats to our national security,” and that “[t]his case is no different.”
- In 2011, ProEnglish hired Phil Tignino as its director of communications. Tignino is the former student coordinator of the Washington State University chapter of Youth for Western Civilization, a far-right student group that has collaborated with many contentious figures, including Jared Taylor of American Renaissance, a cornerstone white nationalist publication.