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Oklahoma Residents Show Strong Support for Official English Legislation

More Than Four in Five Sooner State Residents Favor Common Language Policy

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To: State and City Desks

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 /U.S. Newswire/ -- Eighty-two percent of likely voters in Oklahoma favor making English the official language of the state, according to a poll conducted by Wilson Research Strategies. The survey found an overwhelming majority of Oklahoma residents want the state to conduct business in English, including strong support within each political party and each section of the state. The survey of 300 likely voters was conducted Sept. 27-28 and has a margin of error of plus or minus 5.7 percent.

"Oklahomans would never want to live in an English-only state, but they are equally opposed to an English-plus state," said Mauro E. Mujica, chairman of the board of U.S. English Inc. "With elections upcoming, this poll serves to remind politicians where the voters stand, and should spur voters to determine where their leaders stand."

Oklahoma has not considered official English legislation since 2003; however, Republican gubernatorial nominee Ernest Istook has made uniting the state under one common language part of his campaign. Istook, a current member of Congress from Oklahoma, has long been a supporter of official English measures at the federal level, including his current co-sponsorship of H.R. 997, the English Language Unity Act.

Making English the official language of a state calls upon the government to conduct business in English and to limit governmental multilingualism to common-sense exceptions such as health care, public safety, judicial proceedings, and tourism. To date, 27 states have English as their official language.

"Though there remains much debate on immigration policy, this poll demonstrates that there is no such debate on the type of assimilation policy the Oklahoma legislature should advance," remarked Mujica. "I hope that Oklahoma voters will select candidates that match their beliefs regarding the government's role in assimilating immigrants. I look forward to working with these elected officials and the people of Oklahoma to craft a policy that benefits the entire state."

U.S. English Inc. is the nation's oldest and largest non-partisan citizens' action group dedicated to preserving the unifying role of the English language in the United States. Founded in 1983 by the late Sen. S.I. Hayakawa of California, U.S. English Inc. now has more than 1.8 million members nationwide. U.S. English Inc. can be found on the Web at <http://www.usenglish.org>.

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