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A RESOLUTION URGING NEW YORK CITY
TO ABANDON ITS BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

30 WHEREAS: In 1974, the New York City Board of Education signed a federal consent
40 decree with Aspira, a Hispanic education and advocacy group, requiring that
50 students who speak limited English be taught almost exclusively in their native
60 languages. Today, this decree requiring bilingual education still governs the
70 schooling of some 170,000 students in the five boroughs; and,

80 WHEREAS: Most students who fail a test of English competence are placed automatically in
90 bilingual classes, in which they learn subjects like math and social studies in
100 their native languages. They can be switched out only at a parent's insistence.
110 Some students linger in these classes for six years or more; and,

120 WHEREAS: The vast majority enter public schools at the age of five or six, when children
130 can most quickly and easily learn another language; instead they are placed in
140 native-language programs, receiving perhaps an hour of English each day. Since
150 most of these students in question are Hispanic, the most accurate translation of
160 "bilingual education" is Spanish-almost-only instruction; and,

170 WHEREAS: A 2000 study by New York's Task Force on Bilingual Education found that
180 after three years, fewer than half of the students in the program had acquired
190 enough English skills to allow them to join regular classes. For those who enter
200 after sixth grade, the number dropped to 7 percent; and,

210 WHEREAS: Statewide academic test scores of California's 1.4 million limited-English
220 immigrant students showed huge gains in the two years since the passage of
230 Prop. 227, the June 1998 ballot initiative that largely replaced bilingual
240 education with English immersion programs. Those school districts that most
250 strictly complied with the terms of Prop. 227 exhibited the greatest gains, while
260 those school districts that attempted to retain their bilingual programs lagged far
270 behind the rest of the state; and,

280 WHEREAS: From 1998 to 2000, California English learners in the elementary grades most
290 affected by the changed curriculum (2 through 6) raised their mean percentile
300 scores by 35% in reading, 43% in mathematics, 32% in language, and 44% in
310 spelling, with an average increase of 39% across all subjects; and,

320 WHEREAS: Currently one in eight children in New York City are educated primarily in a
330 language other than English.

340 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the New York
350 City school system to remove its bilingual education program and to replace it
360 with English immersion classes.

370 MANDATES: Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani
380 New York City Schools Chancellor Harold Levy
390 President, New York City Board of Education, William C. Thompson, Jr
400 Vice President, New York City Board of Education, Irene H. Impellizzeri

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