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**SCHAKOWSKY AND COLLEAGUES DEFEAT ATTEMPT TO DELAY ENFORCEMENT OF LANDMARK EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today hailed action by the House of Representatives following the defeat of an amendment that would have delayed enforcement of Executive Order 13166. Executive Order 13166 requires federal agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to provide translators to limited English proficient individuals.

Below is Schakowsky's Congressional Record statement in opposition to the amendment:

*Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to the amendment offered by the gentleman from Oklahoma, which would delay enforcement of Executive Order 13166 that requires federal agencies and organizations that receive federal funding to provide translators to limited English proficient individuals.*

*Executive Order 13166 promotes actions consistent with, but not unduly burdensome to, the fundamental mission of federal programs. Flexibility is recognized as essential - states and providers need only do what they can, given their circumstances, to assist limited English proficiency (LEP) individuals. For example, street signs do not need to be translated into characters and doctors who serve LEP individuals on an infrequent basis are not required to have full-time interpreters or bilingual staff, this would be considered undue burden.*

*The need for Executive Order 13166 and its implementing guidance cannot be overstated. LEP individuals - many of whom initially enter the United States as refugees and asylees - endure restricted access to critical public health, hospital and medical services which they often desperately need. The most recent Census data that documents over 32 million individuals, over one in nine Americans, speak a language other than English at home. While this reality should be viewed as a cultural strength of our nation, in the health care context an individual's limited English proficiency often results in inadequate health care. An inability to comprehend the patient, mixed with a fear of liability, can also lead some doctors to order expensive, otherwise avoidable tests. Conversely, because of communication problems, non-English speakers often avoid seeking treatment until it is absolutely necessary, which disproportionately causes them to under utilize cost-effective preventive care. This is not only unhealthy, but often more expensive. Without Executive Order 13166 and translation services for LEP populations, citizens and non-citizens alike suffer.*

*Parents of citizen children, who have limited knowledge of English, can not explain to the doctor what is wrong with their child nor do they understand what the doctor tells them*

**to do for treatment. If a LEP individual arrives at a hospital with symptoms of tuberculosis - or smallpox -- without an interpreter, hospital staff and public health officials would be unable to communicate with the patient and a public health hazard could easily spiral out of control.**

**Here are additional stories that have resulted from inadequate LEP translation services available.**

**- A Korean woman appeared for a gynecology exam, but no interpreter or language line assistance was provided. The clinician used the 16-year-old son of a complete stranger to translate.**

**- A woman requiring treatment for a uterine cyst was unable to receive treatment on two separate occasions because an interpreter was unavailable.**

**- A man suffering from a skin condition requiring laser treatment underwent treatment for over a year. The man endured days of pain after each treatment, but was unable to communicate this because he was never provided with an interpreter. Only after a community organization intervened did the clinic understand the patient's pain and adjust the treatment.**

**- A Russian-speaking woman experienced life-threatening complications from prescribed medications. Without an interpreter or use of a language line, doctors in the emergency room were unable to treat her. Only because a Russian-speaking young girl happened by and agreed to help were doctors able to save the woman's life.**

**- A Russian-speaking woman's nine-year-old son had to translate before and after his mother's angioplasty. The hospital refused to use a language line and the child translated for several hours each time.**

**This Executive Order will have a profoundly positive impact on ensuring that all individuals, regardless of language, receive quality care and that disparities in health care access and outcomes due to language barriers are being addressed. There is no good reason to delay the full enforcement of Executive Order 13166. Therefore, I strongly urge my colleagues to vote against this amendment.**