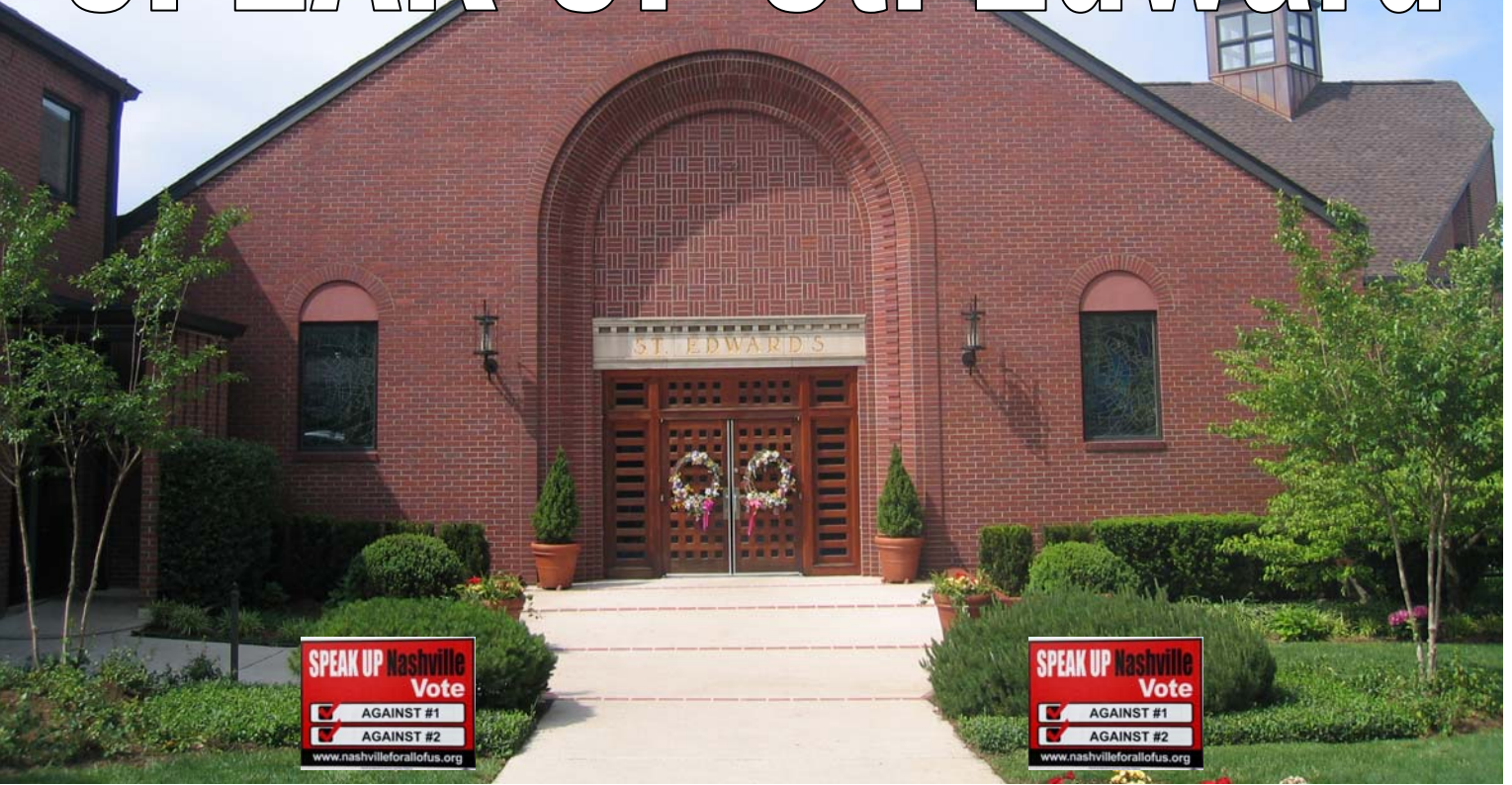


# SPEAK UP St. Edward



Dear Fellow Parishioners,

As Christians, we sometimes struggle with the gospel call of peace and justice. We strive to be well-informed in order to act responsibly and effectively in defense of human dignity, human rights, and the pursuit of justice and peace. Early voting has already begun asking 20 voters to decide on an English Only Referendum. As the co-chairs of St. Edward Social Action Committee, we realize that this issue resonates deeply with our parish community. Many of our religious and elected leaders have cited numerous reasons as to “why” this referendum will not benefit Nashville economically or socially. They have encouraged us to stand with them by voting against this referendum. But most inspiring is the united efforts of Nashville’s academic community to defeat the English-only initiative. The Presidential heads of several of the largest institutes of higher learning in Nashville signed a joint statement condemning the English Only Referendum. We are attaching this statement for your review and ask that you take the time to read it and reflect on its meaning for all of us. We support their efforts and applaud their courage. As Christians, we are obligated to follow Christ’s call to welcome the stranger with love. Keeping this call at the forefront of our actions, please do not delay in voting against this referendum during early voting from January 2<sup>nd</sup> through January 17<sup>th</sup> at Howard School. If these dates are not convenient for you, please go to your appropriate voting site on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and vote “NO” for the English Only Referendum.

May the peace of God be with you,  
Everett and Teresa Bills

For more information, please see the article below from the *Tennessean*, Sunday, December 28th and click on the link below for the [\*Nashville for All of Us\*](#) website.



December 28, 2008

School presidents reject 'English only'

### **Tennessee Voices**

In just a few short days, county residents will go to the polls to decide the fate of the "English-only" amendment that has been proposed for our Metro Charter.

This is not the first time that this proposal has been before the democratic processes in our county. A previous attempt to enact this legislation was halted by the courageous veto of former Mayor Bill Purcell. We have also seen current Mayor Karl Dean stand firm in his opposition. Both of these leaders saw the passage of this legislation not only as unnecessary but as damaging to Nashville.

It is especially important that the higher education community in Nashville be heard on this issue. It is the obligation of institutions of higher education to help their communities think critically about important issues of public policy, especially when the policies have a deep and lasting impact on these communities.

The proposed amendment appears to arise out of a concern about the large number of undocumented immigrants who have moved to Nashville in recent years. While illegal immigration is a legitimate concern that needs thoughtful consideration and action, the proposed amendment does nothing to address this significant issue. Rather, it represents a "shotgun" approach that will have numerous unintended consequences that are largely unrelated to the problems associated with the presence of undocumented people.

Currently, Metro government provides services to its diverse immigrant populations and international visitors in several different languages. These services are provided to facilitate the transition of individuals and families from being "immigrants" to becoming citizens. Refusing to provide translation assistance to visitors, recently arrived immigrants and other English learners who need it is, in essence, refusing to offer the services at all. Is it appropriate to refuse services to those in need just because some are here illegally?

Is it appropriate to deny diverse immigrant populations culturally competent, compassionate health care? If passed, city health-care providers would be prevented from communicating with their patient in the patient's language — a situation that would have dire effects.

Is it appropriate to hinder opportunities for the Nashville community to engage in intellectual dialogue in pursuit of academic excellence? Each year many international students and teachers come to our campuses to enrich our academic mission, participate in our vibrant Nashville community, and contribute to our local economy.

The "English-only" amendment will not force illegal immigrants to leave, nor will it stop the influx of additional undocumented immigrants from coming to Nashville. Instead, it will add unnecessary layers to the natural barriers, which already exist to create challenges for immigrant families who desire to become healthy, productive and contributing citizens of the nation and the Nashville community.

The challenges facing immigrants will go from being "difficult to overcome" to being "impossible to overcome."

These services provided by Metro, which facilitate the transition of individuals and families from being "immigrants" to becoming citizens, also help ensure that our city continues to recruit businesses and attract tourists from around the world.

Metro Nashville is a key player in the global economy. The continued health of Nashville is dependent on the city's ability to attract businesses and tourists from all over the world. The decision of Nissan to relocate its U.S. headquarters to Metro Nashville is but one of the latest examples of international businesses relocating to Middle Tennessee. The proposed charter amendment will negatively impact these efforts by presenting our community as unwelcoming to internationals and backward in its thinking.

Our leaders' efforts to recruit businesses internationally create an environment that is attractive to immigrants, many of whom are not yet able to speak English. A multilingual population is the logical consequence of our efforts to become the business relocation site of choice in the United States. Middle Tennesseans cannot expect to have a thriving, or even stable, economy without an environment that is welcoming and accommodating of the needs of business and those individuals that businesses bring with them.

The concerted efforts of individuals, business leaders, community volunteers and our elected leaders of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County have created a city and a region that is healthy in its diversity, its economy and the opportunities it affords its residents.

The irony of the city known as the "Athens of the South" becoming the first major metropolitan community in America to pass "English only" is a distressing prospect. As academic leaders, we are concerned about the impact — literal and symbolic — on our mission of teaching, learning, curing, and discovering.

A statement by Nashville that we are "English" only is this "blind" instrument

A statement by Nashville that we are "English" only — this "blunt" instrument — would undermine our important work and adversely affect this city known for learning and discovery.

**Sister Mary Peter Muehlenkamp, O.P.**  
president, Aquinas College

**Robert C. Fisher**  
president, Belmont University

**Hazel R. O'Leary**  
president, Fisk University

**L. Randolph Lowry**  
president, Lipscomb University

**Wayne J. Riley**  
president and chief executive officer, Meharry Medical College

**Melvin N. Johnson**  
president, Tennessee State University

**Dan Boone**  
president, Trevecca University

**Nicholas S. Zeppos**  
chancellor, Vanderbilt University

**Forrest Harris**  
president, American Baptist College

# Nashville for All of Us

## VOTE NOW

GET  
QUICK  
FACTS  
[here](#)

Starting January 2 **vote against** ratification of English Only in Nashville

[Voting schedule & location here](#)



RECENT NEWS: [Video features Mayor, others on English Only](#)

[More news in the blog](#)