

Spanish version of anthem is no hit with Bush; The president also spoke against Monday's planned "Day Without Immigrants" national work stoppage.

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Body

A Spanish-language version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" made its debut yesterday and got a quick thumbs down from the White House reviewer-in-chief.

"I think the national anthem ought to be sung in English," President Bush said.

He also expressed his distaste for a national work stoppage called for Monday to dramatize the importance of immigrants to the U.S. economy.

"I'm not a supporter of boycotts," Bush said, while restating his support for a comprehensive overhaul of immigration laws.

Bush made his comments at a Rose Garden news conference as a Spanish-language version of "The Star-Spangled Banner" - called "Nuestro Himno," meaning *Our Anthem* - hit the airwaves, featuring artists such as Wyclef Jean, hip-hop star Pitbull, and Puerto Rican singers Carlos Ponce and Olga Tanon.

"I think people who want to be a citizen of this country ought to learn English, and they ought to learn to sing the national anthem in English," Bush said.

Monday's planned boycott, called "A Day Without Immigrants," and the emergence of a Spanish-language anthem are ingredients in a national debate over how to deal with more than 11 million illegal immigrants in the United States. Hundreds of thousands of protesters have hit the streets of major U.S. cities to demand the lowering of citizenship barriers. Congress is struggling with the issue, with the House and the Senate moving on opposite tracks.

"I understand how difficult this issue is for some people here in Washington and around the country," Bush said. His approach calls for a temporary guest-worker program, tougher enforcement of laws against hiring illegal immigrants, and stricter border controls.

Acknowledging that immigration has become a highly charged topic, Bush said: "One of the things that's very important is when we debate this issue that we not lose our national soul."

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British music producer Adam Kidron, who came up with the idea of the **Spanish anthem**, said it was not intended to discourage immigrants from learning English or embracing American culture.

"We instead view 'Nuestro Himno' as a song that affords those immigrants that have not yet learned the English language the opportunity to fully understand the character of 'The Star-Spangled Banner,' the American flag and the ideals of freedom that they represent," Kidron said in a statement.

Senate leaders, meanwhile, edged closer to an agreement that could clear the way for passage of broad immigration legislation.

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D., Nev.) said he was dropping two demands that contributed to gridlock several weeks ago. He will **no** longer insist that conservative critics be limited to three chances to change the bill before it passes, he said, and will **no** longer try to dictate which Republicans are named to negotiate a final bill with the House.

How the **Anthem** Translates

An English translation of

"Nuestro Himno," a **Spanish-language version**

*of the **national anthem**:*

Verse 1:

The day is breaking, do you see it? In the light of the dawn?

What we so acclaimed at nightfall?

Its stars, its stripes,

flew yesterday

In the fierce battle, in a sign of victory,

The glow of battle, in step with liberty

At night they said: "It's being defended!"

Chorus:

Oh say!

The voice of your starry beauty

is still unfolding

Over the land of the free

The sacred flag?

Verse 2:

Its stars, its stripes,

Freedom, we are equal

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We are brothers, in our **anthem**.

In the fierce combat, in a sign of victory

The glow of battle, in step with liberty

My people keep fighting

It's time to break the chains

At night they said: "It's being defended!"

Oh say! Your starry beauty is still unfolding.

ONLINE EXTRA

An audio of "Nuestro Himno" can be heard at <http://go.philly.com/anthem>

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