

From: Valenta, Val
To: Adams, Marcia S <Marcia.Adams@SCDMV.net>
Date: 5/18/2006 5:58:05 PM
Subject: Alabama Spanish Situation

Marcia,

Alabama does not translate its driver's manual into Spanish. However, it has not copyrighted the manual, so various advocacy groups have pulled it off the website, translated it at their own cost, and distributed it to members.

Alabama has had two court cases on the giving of driving tests in Spanish. The first case arose when a Republican Governor forbade the giving of tests in anything except English. When some group sued, the case went up to the US Supreme Court on the narrow issue of whether the plaintiffs had standing to sue. While the case was going on, a Democrat was elected, and the DMV and plaintiffs signed a consent decree to give the tests in various languages. So there is no meaningful law in the court case.

Then a conservative group out of Atlanta (I think it was the Southeastern Legal Foundation) sued the DMV for giving tests in foreign languages. The state court ruled in the DMV's favor. My friend in Alabama is out of the office until Monday but will look at the judge's ruling to see if it has anything in it that would be worth our looking at.

One option for us is to agree to no longer print the manual in Spanish but to just put it on our website. That would save us money, anyway.

Val