

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1229

To amend title 4, United States Code, to declare English as the official language of the Government of the United States, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 26, 2009

Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. COBLE, Mr. BOOZMAN, Mr. GALLEGLY, Mr. LUCAS, Mr. CULBERSON, Mr. WILSON of South Carolina, Mr. BARTLETT, Mr. WITTMAN, Mrs. MYRICK, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. KING of Iowa, Mr. BROUN of Georgia, Mr. AKIN, Mr. PRICE of Georgia, Mr. BUCHANAN, Mr. TAYLOR, and Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend title 4, United States Code, to declare English as the official language of the Government of the United States, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Language
5 Act of 2009”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENGLISH AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGE.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title 4, United States Code, is
3 amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

4 **“CHAPTER 6—LANGUAGE OF THE**
5 **GOVERNMENT**

“Sec.

“161. Declaration of official language.

“162. Official Government activities in English.

“163. Preserving and enhancing the role of the official language.

“164. Exceptions.

6 **“§ 161. Declaration of official language**

7 “English shall be the official language of the Govern-
8 ment of the United States.

9 **“§ 162. Official government activities in English**

10 “The Government of the United States shall conduct
11 its official business in English, including publications, in-
12 come tax forms, and informational materials.

13 **“§ 163. Preserving and enhancing the role of the offi-
14 cial language**

15 “The Government of the United States shall preserve
16 and enhance the role of English as the official language
17 of the United States of America. Unless specifically stated
18 in applicable law, no person has a right, entitlement, or
19 claim to have the Government of the United States or any
20 of its officials or representatives act, communicate, per-
21 form or provide services, or provide materials in any lan-
22 guage other than English. If exceptions are made, that
23 does not create a legal entitlement to additional services

1 in that language or any language other than English. If
 2 any forms are issued by the Federal government in a lan-
 3 guage other than English (or such forms are completed
 4 in a language other than English), the English language
 5 version of the form is the sole authority for all legal pur-
 6 poses.

7 **“§ 164. Exceptions**

8 “This chapter does not apply to the use of a language
 9 other than English—

10 “(1) for religious purposes;

11 “(2) for training in foreign languages for inter-
 12 national communication; or

13 “(3) to programs in schools designed to encour-
 14 age students to learn foreign languages.

15 This chapter does not prevent the Government of the
 16 United States from providing interpreters for persons over
 17 62 years of age.”.

18 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of chap-
 19 ters for title 4, United States Code, is amended by adding
 20 at the end the following new item:

“6. Language of the Government 161”.

21 **SEC. 3. REPEAL OF BILINGUAL VOTING REQUIREMENTS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—

23 (1) BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—

24 Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42
 25 U.S.C. 1973aa–1a) is repealed.

1 (2) VOTING RIGHTS.—Section 4 of the Voting
2 Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973b) is amended
3 by striking subsection (f).

4 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

5 (1) REFERENCES TO SECTION 203.—The Vot-
6 ing Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.) is
7 amended—

8 (A) in section 204, by striking “or 203,”;
9 and

10 (B) in the first sentence of section 205, by
11 striking “, 202, or 203” and inserting “or
12 202”.

13 (2) REFERENCES TO SECTION 4.—The Voting
14 Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.), as
15 amended by the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks,
16 and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthor-
17 ization and Amendments Act of 2006 (Public Law
18 109–246), is amended—

19 (A) in sections 2(a), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 4(d),
20 5, 6, 8(a)(2)(A), and 13(a)(1), by striking “, or
21 in contravention of the guarantees set forth in
22 section 4(f)(2)”;

23 (B) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (3) of sec-
24 tion 4(a), by striking “or (in the case of a State
25 or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment

1 under the second sentence of this subsection) in
2 contravention of the guarantees of subsection
3 (f)(2)”; and

4 (C) in paragraphs (1)(B) and (5) of sec-
5 tion 4(a), by striking “or (in the case of a State
6 or subdivision which sought a declaratory judg-
7 ment under the second sentence of this sub-
8 section) that denials or abridgments of the right
9 to vote in contravention of the guarantees of
10 subsection (f)(2) have occurred anywhere in the
11 territory of such State or subdivision”.

12 **SEC. 4. ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT FOR CERE-**
13 **MONIES FOR ADMISSION OF NEW CITIZENS.**

14 Section 337(d) of the Immigration and Nationality
15 Act (8 U.S.C. 1448(d)) is amended by adding at the end
16 the following new sentence: “All public ceremonies in
17 which the oath of allegiance is administered pursuant to
18 this section shall be conducted solely in the English lan-
19 guage.”.

20 **SEC. 5. NONPREEMPTION.**

21 This Act (and the amendments made by this Act)
22 shall not preempt any law of any State.

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