

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1005

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.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 11, 1997

Mr. KING (for himself, Mr. PETRI, Mr. CHRISTENSEN, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Mr. HILLEARY, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. KELLY, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. STUMP, Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina, Mr. NEY, Mr. BONO, Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska, Mr. LAHOOD, Mr. MANZULLO, Mr. WELDON of Florida, and Mrs. ROUKEMA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce, 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

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## 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 1997”.

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 GOVERNMENT**

“Sec.

“161. Declaration of official language.

“162. Official Government activities in English.

“163. Exceptions.

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

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

8 **“§ 162. Official Government activities in English**

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

12 **“§ 163. Exceptions**

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

15 “(1) for religious purposes;

16 “(2) for training in foreign languages for inter-  
17 national communication;

18 “(3) to programs in schools designed to encour-  
19 age students to learn foreign languages; or

20 “(4) by persons over 62 years of age.

21 “This chapter does not prevent the Government of  
22 the United States from providing interpreters for persons  
23 over 62 years of age.”.

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

“6. Language of the Government ..... 161”.

4 **SEC. 3. TERMINATION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION PRO-**  
 5 **GRAMS.**

6 (a) REPEAL OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION ACT.—The  
 7 Bilingual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3281 et seq.) is re-  
 8 pealed.

9 (b) TERMINATION OF OFFICE OF BILINGUAL EDU-  
 10 CATION AND MINORITY LANGUAGES AFFAIRS.—The Of-  
 11 fice of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Af-  
 12 fairs in the Department of Education, established by part  
 13 D of the Bilingual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3331 et  
 14 seq.), is terminated.

15 (c) RECAPTURE OF UNEXPENDED FUNDS.—Any  
 16 funds that have been provided as grants under the Bilin-  
 17 gual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3281 et seq.), and that  
 18 have not been expended before the date of the enactment  
 19 of this Act, shall be recaptured by the Secretary of Edu-  
 20 cation and deposited in the general fund of the Treasury.

21 (d) TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.—

22 (1) COMPLETION OF PROGRAMS DURING CUR-  
 23 RENT SCHOOL YEAR.—Subsections (a) and (c) shall

1 not apply to any program under part A of the Bilin-  
2 gual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3291 et seq.) until  
3 completion of the most recent school year of the pro-  
4 gram that commences after the date of the enact-  
5 ment of this Act.

6 (2) ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSITION TO SPECIAL  
7 ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.—During  
8 the 1-year period beginning on the date of the enact-  
9 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Education may  
10 assist local educational agencies in the transition of  
11 children enrolled in programs assisted under the Bi-  
12 lingual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3281 et seq.) to  
13 Special Alternative Instructional Programs that do  
14 not make use of the native language of the student.

15 **SEC. 4. REPEAL OF BILINGUAL VOTING REQUIREMENTS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—

17 (1) BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—  
18 Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42  
19 U.S.C. 1973aa–1a) is repealed.

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

23 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

1           (1) REFERENCES TO SECTION 203.—The Voting  
2 Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.) is  
3 amended—

4           (A) in section 204, by striking “or 203,”;

5           and

6           (B) in the first sentence of section 205, by  
7 striking “, 202, or 203” and inserting “or  
8 202”.

9           (2) REFERENCES TO SECTION 4.—The Voting  
10 Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 1973 et seq.) is  
11 amended—

12           (A) in sections 2(a), 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 4(d),  
13 5, 6, and 13, by striking “, or in contravention  
14 of the guarantees set forth in section 4(f)(2)”;

15           (B) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (3) of sec-  
16 tion 4(a), by striking “or (in the case of a State  
17 or subdivision seeking a declaratory judgment  
18 under the second sentence of this subsection) in  
19 contravention of the guarantees of subsection  
20 (f)(2)”;

21           (C) in paragraphs (1)(B) and (5) of sec-  
22 tion 4(a), by striking “or (in the case of a State  
23 or subdivision which sought a declaratory judg-  
24 ment under the second sentence of this sub-  
25 section) that denials or abridgments of the right

1 to vote in contravention of the guarantees of  
2 subsection (f)(2) have occurred anywhere in the  
3 territory of such State or subdivision”.

4 **SEC. 5. ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT FOR CERE-**  
5 **MONIES FOR ADMISSION OF NEW CITIZENS.**

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

12 **SEC. 6. NONPREEMPTION.**

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

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