

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 931

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, 2003

Mr. KING of New York (for himself, Mr. PAUL, Mr. GOODE, Mr. CRANE, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. FORBES, Mr. AKIN, Mr. EVERETT, Mr. COBLE, Mr. BURR, Mr. BAKER, Mr. NEY, Mr. KING of Iowa, and Mr. DOOLITTLE) 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

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 2003”.

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. Preserving and enhancing the role of the official language.

“164. 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. Preserving and enhancing the role of the offi-
13 cial language**

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

1 **“§ 164. Exceptions**

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

4 “(1) for religious purposes;

5 “(2) for training in foreign languages for inter-
6 national communication;

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

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

10 “This chapter does not prevent the Government of
11 the United States from providing interpreters for persons
12 over 62 years of age.”.

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

“6. Language of the Government 161”.

16 **SEC. 3. TERMINATION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION PRO-**
17 **GRAMS.**

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

21 (b) TERMINATION OF OFFICE OF BILINGUAL EDU-
22 CATION AND MINORITY LANGUAGES AFFAIRS.—The Of-
23 fice of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Af-
24 fairs in the Department of Education, established by part

1 D of the Bilingual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3331 et
2 seq.), is terminated.

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

9 (d) TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS.—

10 (1) COMPLETION OF PROGRAMS DURING CUR-
11 RENT SCHOOL YEAR.—Subsections (a) and (c) shall
12 not apply to any program under part A of the Bilin-
13 gual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3291 et seq.) until
14 completion of the most recent school year of the pro-
15 gram that commences after the date of the enact-
16 ment of this Act.

17 (2) ASSISTANCE FOR TRANSITION TO SPECIAL
18 ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS.—During
19 the 1-year period beginning on the date of the enact-
20 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Education may
21 assist local educational agencies in the transition of
22 children enrolled in programs assisted under the Bi-
23 lingual Education Act (20 U.S.C. 3281 et seq.) to
24 Special Alternative Instructional Programs that do
25 not make use of the native language of the student.

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

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—

3 (1) BILINGUAL ELECTION REQUIREMENTS.—

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

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

9 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—

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

13 (A) in section 204, by striking “or 203,”;
14 and

15 (B) in the first sentence of section 205, by
16 striking “, 202, or 203” and inserting “or
17 202”.

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

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

24 (B) in paragraphs (1)(A) and (3) of sec-
25 tion 4(a), by striking “or (in the case of a State
26 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. 5. 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. 6. NONPREEMPTION.**

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

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