

A bill for an act
relating to state government; designating English as the official language;
proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 1.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

Section 1. **[1.55] OFFICIAL STATE LANGUAGE.**

Subdivision 1. **Designation.** English is the official language of the state of Minnesota. English must be used by state and local governments, government officers and employees acting in the scope of their employment, and for government documents and records. Official actions of the state which bind or commit the state, or actions that present the official views or positions of the state must be in English.

Subd. 2. **Exceptions.** This section does not apply:

(1) to instruction in foreign language courses;

(2) to instruction designed to aid students with limited English in a timely transition and integration into the general educational system;

(3) to the promotion of international commerce, tourism, and sporting events;

(4) when determined to interfere with needs of the justice system;

(5) when the public safety, health, or emergency services require the use of other languages; provided that any authorization for the use of languages other than English in printing informational materials or publications for general distribution must be approved in a public proceeding by the governing board or authority of the relevant state or local government entity and the decision recorded in publicly available minutes; and

(6) when expert testimony or witnesses may require a language other than English; provided that for purposes of deliberation, decision making, or record keeping, the official

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version of the testimony or commentary must be the officially translated English-language version.

Subd. 3. **Costs.** All costs related to the preparation, translation, printing, and recording of documents, records, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, or other informational materials in languages other than English resulting from an exception in subdivision 2 must be indicated as a separate budget line item in the agency, departmental, or office budget.

Subd. 4. **Employment.** No person may be denied employment with the state or with any political subdivision of the state based solely upon that person's lack of proficiency in a foreign language, except when related to bona fide job needs reflected in the exceptions in subdivision 2.

Subd. 5. **Construction.** This section must not be construed in any way to infringe on the rights of citizens under the Minnesota Constitution or the United States Constitution in the use of language in activities or functions conducted solely in the private sector. No agency or officer of the state or of any political subdivision of the state may place any restrictions or requirements regarding language usage for businesses operating in the private sector other than in official documents, forms, submissions, or other communications directed to government agencies and officers, which must be in English as required by this section.

Subd. 6. **Right of action.** Any citizen of the state has standing to bring an action against the state to enforce this section. The district court has jurisdiction to hear and decide actions brought under this section.