

103D CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 123

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 5, 1993

Mr. EMERSON (for himself, Mr. PORTER, Mr. SKELTON, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. BEREUTER, Mr. HANCOCK, Mr. BEVILL, Mr. SPENCE, Mr. RAVENEL, Mr. HYDE, Mr. COX, Mr. BATEMAN, Mrs. ROUKEMA, Mr. KASICH, Mr. BLILEY, and Mr. PETRI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

OCTOBER 15, 1993

Additional sponsors: Mr. OXLEY, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. HENRY, Mr. PACKARD, Mr. MYERS of Indiana, Mr. FAWELL, Mr. MCCRERY, Mr. MCCANDLESS, Mr. SOLOMON, Mr. SUNDQUIST, Mr. GALLO, Mr. BARRETT of Nebraska, Mr. DORNAN, Mr. BROWDER, Mr. SHUSTER, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. LIVINGSTON, Mr. BAKER of California, Mr. MOORHEAD, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. TAYLOR of North Carolina, Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas, Mr. STUMP, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. CLEMENT, Mr. LEWIS of Florida, Mr. GEKAS, Mr. HUTTO, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. PAXON, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. CLINGER, Mr. DOOLITTLE, Mr. BALLENGER, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. CRAMER, Mr. ROGERS, Mr. BACHUS of Alabama, Mr. INGLIS of South Carolina, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. PARKER, Mr. GINGRICH, Mr. ARCHER, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. CRANE, Mr. NEAL of North Carolina, Mr. WELDON, Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland, Mr. HOEKSTRA, Mr. KINGSTON, Mr. COBLE, Mr. ARMEY, Mr. BUNNING, Mr. BARLOW, Mr. BURTON of Indiana, Mr. LEWIS of California, Mr. PAYNE of Virginia, Mr. HERGER, Mr. ROBERTS, Mr. FRANKS of Connecticut, Mrs. MEYERS of Kansas, Mr. EVERETT, Mr. MONTGOMERY, Mr. QUINN, Mr. DICKEY, Mrs. BENTLEY, Mr. GOODLATTE, Mr. CANADY, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, and Mr. HUNTER

Deleted sponsor: Mr. SCOTT (added March 3, 1993; deleted April 29, 1993)

A BILL

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

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 “Language of Govern-
5 ment Act of 1993”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds and declares—

8 (1) that the United States is comprised of indi-
9 viduals and groups from diverse ethnic, cultural, and
10 linguistic backgrounds;

11 (2) that the United States has benefited and
12 continues to benefit from this rich diversity;

13 (3) that throughout the history of the Nation,
14 the common thread binding those of differing back-
15 grounds has been a common language;

16 (4) that in order to preserve unity in diversity,
17 and to prevent division along linguistic lines, the
18 United States should maintain a language common
19 to all people;

1 (5) that English has historically been the com-
2 mon language and the language of opportunity in
3 the United States;

4 (6) that the use of a single common language
5 in the conduct of the Government's official business
6 will promote efficiency and fairness to all people;
7 and

8 (7) that English should be recognized in law as
9 the language of official business of the Government.

10 (b) CONSTRUCTION.—The amendments made by sec-
11 tion 3—

12 (1) are not intended in any way to discriminate
13 against or restrict the rights of any individual in the
14 United States;

15 (2) are not intended to discourage or prevent
16 the use of languages other than English in any
17 nonofficial capacity; and

18 (3) except where an existing law of the United
19 States directly contravenes the amendments made by
20 section 3 (such as by requiring the use of a language
21 other than English for official business of the Gov-
22 ernment of the United States), are not intended to
23 repeal existing laws of the United States.

1 **SEC. 3. ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF GOVERN-**
2 **MENT.**

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

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

“Sec.

“161. Declaration of official language of Government.

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

“163. Official Government activities in English.

“164. Standing.

“165. Definitions.

7 **“§ 161. Declaration of official language of Govern-**
8 **ment**

9 “The official language of the Government of the
10 United States is English.

11 **“§ 162. Preserving and enhancing the role of the offi-**
12 **cial language**

13 “The Government shall have an affirmative obligation
14 to preserve and enhance the role of English as the official
15 language of the United States Government. Such obliga-
16 tion shall include encouraging greater opportunities for in-
17 dividuals to learn the English language.

18 **“§ 163. Official Government activities in English**

19 “(a) CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.—The Government
20 shall conduct its official business in English.

21 “(b) DENIAL OF SERVICES.—No person shall be de-
22 nied services, assistance, or facilities, directly or indirectly

1 provided by the Government solely because the person
2 communicates in English.

3 “(c) ENTITLEMENT.—Every person in the United
4 States is entitled to—

5 “(1) communicate with the Government in Eng-
6 lish;

7 “(2) receive information from or contribute in-
8 formation to the Government in English; and

9 “(3) be informed of or be subject to official or-
10 ders in English.

11 **“§ 164. Standing**

12 “Any person alleging injury arising from a violation
13 of this chapter shall have standing to sue in the courts
14 of the United States under sections 2201 and 2202 of title
15 28, United States Code, and for such other relief as may
16 be considered appropriate by the courts.

17 **“§ 165. Definitions**

18 “For purposes of this chapter:

19 “(1) GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘Government’
20 means all branches of the Government of the United
21 States and all employees and officials of the Govern-
22 ment of the United States while performing official
23 business.

24 “(2) OFFICIAL BUSINESS.—The term ‘official
25 business’ means those governmental actions, docu-

1 ments, or policies which are enforceable with the full
 2 weight and authority of the Government, but does
 3 not include—

4 “(A) actions or documents that are pri-
 5 marily informational or educational;

6 “(B) actions, documents, or policies that
 7 are not enforceable in the United States;

8 “(C) actions, documents, or policies nec-
 9 essary for international relations, trade, or com-
 10 merce;

11 “(D) actions or documents that protect the
 12 public health or safety;

13 “(E) actions that protect the rights of vic-
 14 tims of crimes or criminal defendants; and

15 “(F) documents that utilize terms of art or
 16 phrases from languages other than English.”.

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

“6. Language of the Government 161”.

20 **SEC. 4. PREEMPTION.**

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

23 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

24 The amendments made by section 3 shall take effect
 25 upon the date of enactment of this Act, except that no

- 1 suit may be commenced to enforce or determine rights
- 2 under the amendments until January 1, 1994.

