

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5800

To require all applicants for a commercial driver’s license to demonstrate English language proficiency as a condition for testing and issuance, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 21, 2025

Mr. HARRIGAN (for himself, Mr. NEHLS, and Mr. ONDER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To require all applicants for a commercial driver’s license to demonstrate English language proficiency as a condition for testing and issuance, 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 “Standardized Assess-
5 ment for Fluency in English for Drivers Act” or the
6 “SAFE Drivers Act”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

1 (1) COMMERCIAL DRIVER’S LICENSE.—The
2 term “commercial driver’s license” has the meaning
3 given such term in section 31301 of title 49, United
4 States Code.

5 (2) ENGLISH PROFICIENCY TEST.—The term
6 “English proficiency test” means a standardized as-
7 sessment approved by the Administrator of the Fed-
8 eral Motor Carrier Safety Administration that evalu-
9 ates an individual’s ability to read, write, and under-
10 stand English in the context of commercial motor
11 vehicle operation, including—

12 (A) reading road signs and safety instruc-
13 tions;

14 (B) understanding and responding to spo-
15 ken instructions and emergency communica-
16 tions; and

17 (C) writing driver logs, reports, and re-
18 quired documentation.

19 (3) APPLICANT.—The term “applicant” means
20 any individual applying for a new commercial driv-
21 er’s license or the renewal of an existing commercial
22 driver’s license.

23 **SEC. 3. ENGLISH PROFICIENCY REQUIREMENT.**

24 (a) STANDARDS AND ADMINISTRATION.—Section
25 31308 of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

1 (1) in paragraph (3) by striking “; and” and in-
2 serting a semicolon;

3 (2) in paragraph (4)(E) by striking the period
4 at the end and inserting “; and”; and

5 (3) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(5) before a commercial driver’s license or
7 learners permit is issued or renewed, each applicant
8 for a commercial driver’s license or for a renewal of
9 such license must pass the English language pro-
10 ficiency test issued under section 4(a) of the SAFE
11 Drivers Act.”.

12 (b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by sub-
13 section (a) shall apply to any individual issued or renewed
14 a commercial driver’s license or learners permit on or after
15 the date of enactment of this Act.

16 **SEC. 4. IMPLEMENTATION AND OVERSIGHT.**

17 (a) STANDARDS AND ADMINISTRATION.—The Ad-
18 ministrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Adminis-
19 tration shall—

20 (1) develop, maintain, and approve the English
21 language proficiency test; and

22 (2) provide guidance to States for administering
23 such test as part of commercial driver’s license test-
24 ing or renewal.

1 (b) STATE RESPONSIBILITIES.—In issuing commer-
2 cial driver’s licenses and learners permits, State depart-
3 ments of motor vehicles shall—

4 (1) administer and verify the English pro-
5 ficiency requirement; and

6 (2) ensure that applicants meet all other Fed-
7 eral and State commercial driver’s license require-
8 ments.

9 (c) REPORTING.—In administering the English lan-
10 guage proficiency test under subsection (a), States shall
11 annually report to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Ad-
12 ministration on the number of applicants testing, pass
13 rates, and compliance outcomes.

14 (d) FEDERAL COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transpor-
16 tation, acting through the Administrator of the Fed-
17 eral Motor Carrier Safety Administration, shall mon-
18 itor State compliance with the requirements of this
19 Act.

20 (2) WITHHOLDING OF FUNDS.—If the Sec-
21 retary determines that a State is not in substantial
22 compliance, the Secretary may withhold a portion of
23 Federal funds apportioned to the State under sec-
24 tions 104(b)(4) and 31313 of Title 49, United

1 States Code, until the State demonstrates compli-
2 ance.

3 (3) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—The Secretary
4 shall submit an annual report to Congress summa-
5 rizing State compliance, enforcement actions taken,
6 and any recommendations to strengthen implementa-
7 tion.

8 **SEC. 5. RULEMAKING AUTHORITY.**

9 The Secretary of Transportation may issue such reg-
10 ulations as are necessary to carry out the provisions of
11 this Act.

12 **SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

13 This Act shall take effect on the date that is 12
14 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

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