
By: **Delegates McDonough, Weir, Bartlett, Bates, Boschert, Boteler, Boutin, Cadden, Cluster, Dwyer, Eckardt, Edwards, Elliott, Elmore, Frank, Gilleland, Glassman, Impallaria, Jennings, Kach, Kelly, Krebs, McConkey, McMillan, Miller, O'Donnell, Shank, Shewell, Smigiel, Sossi, Stocksdale, Stull, and Weldon**

Introduced and read first time: February 11, 2005

Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **English Language - Formal Recognition**

3 FOR the purpose of designating the English language as the official language of the
4 State of Maryland; providing for certain exceptions; providing that this Act may
5 not be construed to require the translation into English of any official motto or
6 slogan; and making provisions of this Act severable.

7 BY adding to

8 Article - State Government

9 Section 10-1301 to be under the new subtitle "Subtitle 13. Official Language of
10 the State of Maryland"

11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2004 Replacement Volume)

13 **Preamble**

14 WHEREAS, Maryland comprises people from many ethnic, cultural, and
15 linguistic backgrounds, all of whom have contributed to this State the richness of
16 their heritages; and

17 WHEREAS, Maryland has been greatly enriched by this diversity, and the
18 government should always take steps to promote the dignity of all the heritages that
19 form this State's pluralistic society; and

20 WHEREAS, It is not the purpose of this Act nor may this Act be construed to
21 infringe upon the rights of citizens to exercise the use of a language of their choice for
22 private conduct; now, therefore,

23 **SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF**
24 **MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:**

1

Article - State Government

2

SUBTITLE 13. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

3 10-1301.

4 (A) (1) ENGLISH IS RECOGNIZED AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF
5 GOVERNMENT OF THIS STATE.

6 (2) AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF THE STATE, ENGLISH IS THE
7 LANGUAGE OF GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS AND ACTIONS.

8 (B) THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION APPLY TO:

9 (1) THE LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, AND JUDICIAL BRANCHES OF
10 GOVERNMENT; AND

11 (2) THE STATE AND EACH POLITICAL SUBDIVISION AND MUNICIPAL
12 CORPORATION OF THE STATE, INCLUDING EACH DEPARTMENT, AGENCY, UNIT,
13 ORGANIZATION, AND INSTRUMENTALITY THEREOF.

14 (C) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION, AN ENTITY
15 SUBJECT TO THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION SHALL:

16 (1) WRITE AND PUBLISH EACH OFFICIAL DOCUMENT IN ENGLISH; AND

17 (2) CONDUCT EACH MEETING AND OTHER OFFICIAL ORAL
18 COMMUNICATION IT AUTHORIZES IN ENGLISH.

19 (D) THE STATE AND EACH POLITICAL SUBDIVISION AND MUNICIPAL
20 CORPORATION OF THE STATE MAY CONDUCT ITS AFFAIRS IN A LANGUAGE OTHER
21 THAN ENGLISH TO:

22 (1) COMPLY WITH FEDERAL LAW;

23 (2) PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY;

24 (3) PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF CIVIL LITIGANTS, CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS,
25 OR VICTIMS OF CRIME;

26 (4) ASSIST STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT PROFICIENT IN THE ENGLISH
27 LANGUAGE BY PROVIDING ENGLISH INSTRUCTION TO FACILITATE AS RAPIDLY AS
28 POSSIBLE A TRANSITION TO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE;

29 (5) PROVIDE INTERPRETATION FOR DEAF INDIVIDUALS IN AMERICAN
30 SIGN LANGUAGE;

31 (6) TEACH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE;

32 (7) PROMOTE THE ARTS, INTERNATIONAL COMMERCE, OR TOURISM; OR

1 (8) ASSIST PERSONS WHO ARE NOT PROFICIENT IN ENGLISH IN THE
2 CONDUCT OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS.

3 (E) THIS SECTION MAY NOT BE CONSTRUED TO REQUIRE THE TRANSLATION
4 INTO ENGLISH OF ANY OFFICIAL MOTTO OR SLOGAN.

5 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That if any provision of this
6 Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid for any
7 reason in a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity does not affect other
8 provisions or any other application of this Act which can be given effect without the
9 invalid provision or application, and for this purpose the provisions of this Act are
10 declared severable.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
12 October 1, 2005.