

HOUSE BILL 443

Unofficial Copy  
P1  
HB 657/95 - CGM

1998 Regular Session  
8r1259  
CF 8r1460

---

By: **Delegates Edwards, Holt, La Vay, Brinkley, Conroy, Bissett, Owings, Jacobs, V. Mitchell, Cadden, Flanagan, Wood, McClenahan, Linton, Baldwin, Malone, Weir, Redmer, McKee, DeCarlo, Donoghue, Bonsack, Bozman, Guns, Slade, Conway, Mossburg, Greenip, Klima, Ports, M. Burns, Morgan, Schade, Rzepkowski, Faulkner, Elliott, Snodgrass, Stup, Getty, Stocksdale, Stull, Harkins, Hecht, Kittleman, and Comeau**

Introduced and read first time: February 4, 1998  
Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

---

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 41 - Governor - Executive and Administrative Departments  
9 Section 18-207  
10 Annotated Code of Maryland  
11 (1997 Replacement Volume and 1997 Supplement)

12 Preamble

13 WHEREAS, Maryland is comprised of people from many ethnic, cultural, and  
14 linguistic backgrounds, each of whom has contributed to this State the richness of  
15 their heritage; and

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

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

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

**Article 41 - Governor - Executive and Administrative Departments**

2 18-207.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (1) COMPLY WITH FEDERAL LAW;

22 (2) PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY;

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

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

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

30 (6) TEACH A FOREIGN LANGUAGE;

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

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

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

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

9 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take  
10 effect October 1, 1998.