



Full Texts of State Official English Laws

ALABAMA (1990)

ALA. CONST. AMEND. 509

English as Official Language of State.

English is the official language of the state of Alabama. The legislature shall enforce this amendment by appropriate legislation. The legislature and officials of the state of Alabama shall take all steps necessary to insure that the role of English as the common language of the state of Alabama is preserved and enhanced. The legislature shall make no law which diminishes or ignores the role of English as the common language of the state of Alabama.

Any person who is a resident of or doing business in the state of Alabama shall have standing to sue the state of Alabama to enforce this amendment, and the courts of record of the state of Alabama shall have jurisdiction to hear cases brought to enforce this provision. The legislature may provide reasonable and appropriate limitations on the time and manner of suits brought under this amendment.

ALASKA (1998)

Ballot Measure 6 (November 1998 Election)

Section 1. Findings and Purpose

The people of the state of Alaska find that English is the common unifying language of the state of Alaska and the United States of America, and declare a compelling interest in promoting, preserving and strengthening its use.

Section 2. Official Language

The English language is the official language of the State of Alaska.

Section 3. Scope

The English language is the language to be used by all public agencies in all government functions and actions. The English language shall be used in the preparation of all official public documents and records, including all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the government.

Section 4. Applicability

This Act applies to the legislative and executive branches of the State of Alaska and all political subdivisions, including all departments, agencies, divisions and instrumentalities of the State, the University of Alaska, all public authorities and corporations, all local governments and departments, agencies, divisions, and instrumentalities of local governments, and all government officers and employees.

Section 5. Exceptions

The government, as defined in Section 4 of this Act, may use a language other than English when necessary for the following purposes:

- to communicate health and safety information or when an emergency requires the use of a language other than English,
- to teach another language to students proficient in English,
- to teach English to students of limited English proficiency,
- to promote international relations, trade, commerce, tourism or sporting events,
- to protect the constitutional and legal rights of criminal defendants,
- to serve the needs of the judicial system in civil and criminal cases in compliance with court rules and orders,
- to investigate criminal activity and protect the rights or crime victims,

to the extent necessary to comply with federal law, including the Native American Languages Act,

to attend or observe religious ceremonies,

to use non-English terms of art, names, phrases, or expressions included as part of communications otherwise in English, and

to communicate orally with constituents by elected public officials and their staffs, if the public official or staff member is already proficient in a language other than English.

An individual may provide testimony or make a statement to the government in a language other than English, if the individual is not an officer or employee of the government, and if the testimony or statement is translated into English and included in the records of the government.

Section 6. Public Accountability

All costs related to the preparation, translation, printing, or recording of documents, records, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, or other material in languages other than English shall be defined as a separate line item in the budget of every governmental agency, department, or office.

Section 7. Non-Denial of Employment or Services

No governmental entity shall require knowledge of a language other than English as a condition of employment unless the requirements of the position fall within one of the exceptions provided in Section 5 of this Act, and facility in another language is a bona fide job qualification required to fulfill a function included within one of the exceptions.

No person may be denied services, assistance, benefits, or facilities, directly or indirectly provided by the government, because that person communicates only in English.

Section 8. Private Sector Excluded

This Act shall not be construed in any way that infringes upon the rights of persons to use languages other than English in activities or functions conducted solely in the private sector, and the government may not restrict the use of language other than English in such private activities or functions.

Section 9. Private Cause of Action Authorized

Any person may bring suit against any governmental entity to enforce the provisions of this Act.

Section 10. Severability

The provisions of this Act are independent and severable, and if any provisions of this Act, or the applicability of any provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected and shall be given effect to the fullest extent practicable.

ARIZONA (2006)

Ariz. Const. Art. XXVIII

English as the Official Language: Definitions

Section 1. In this article, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "Government" includes all laws, public proceedings, rules, publications, orders, actions, programs, policies, departments, boards, agencies, organizations and instrumentalities of this state or political subdivisions of this state, as appropriate under the circumstances to a particular official action.
2. "Official action" includes the performance of any function or action on behalf of this state or a political subdivision of this state or required by state law that appears to present the views, position or imprimatur

of the state or political subdivision or that binds or commits the state or political subdivision, but does not include:

- (a) The teaching of or the encouragement of learning languages other than English.
- (b) Actions required under the federal individuals with disabilities education act or other federal laws.
- (c) Actions, documents or policies necessary for tourism, commerce or international trade.
- (d) Actions or documents that protect the public health and safety, including law enforcement and emergency services.
- (e) Actions that protect the rights of victims of crimes or criminal defendants.
- (f) Using terms of art or phrases from languages other than English.
- (g) Using or preserving Native American languages.
- (h) Providing assistance to hearing impaired or illiterate persons.
- (i) Informal and nonbinding translations or communications among or between representatives of government and other persons if this activity does not affect or impair supervision, management, conduct or execution of official actions and if the representatives of government make clear that these translations or communications are unofficial and are not binding on this state or a political subdivision of this state.
- (j) Actions necessary to preserve the right to petition for the redress of grievances.

3. "Preserve, protect and enhance the role of English" includes:

- (a) Avoiding any official actions that ignore, harm or diminish the role of English as the language of government.
 - (b) Protecting the rights of persons in this state who use English.
 - (c) Encouraging greater opportunities for individuals to learn the English language.
 - (d) To the greatest extent possible under federal statute, providing services, programs, publications, documents and materials in English.
4. "Representatives of government" includes all individuals or entities during the performance of the individual's or entity's official actions.

Official language of Arizona

Section 2. The official language of the state of Arizona is English.

Preserving and enhancing the role of the official language; right to use English

Section 3. A. Representatives of government in this state shall preserve, protect and enhance the role of English as the official language of the government of Arizona.

B. A person shall not be discriminated against or penalized in any way because the person uses or attempts to use English in public or private communication.

Official actions to be conducted in English

Section 4. Official actions shall be conducted in English.

Rules of construction

Section 5. This article shall not be construed to prohibit any representative of government, including a member of the legislature, while performing official duties, from communicating unofficially through any medium with another person in a language other than English if official action is conducted in English.

Standing; notification of attorney general; recovery of costs

Section 6. A. A person who resides or does business in this state may file a civil action for relief from any official action that violates this article in a manner that causes injury to the person.

B. A person who resides or does business in this state and who contends that this article is not being implemented or enforced may file a civil action to determine if the failure or inaction complained of is a violation of this article and for injunctive or mandatory relief.

C. A person shall not file an action under this section unless the person has notified the attorney general of the alleged violation and the attorney general or other appropriate representative of government has not provided appropriate relief within a reasonable time under the circumstances. An action filed under this section may be in addition to or in lieu of any action by officers of this state, including the attorney general.

D. A person who files and is successful in an action under this section may be awarded all costs expended or incurred in the action, including reasonable attorney fees.

ARKANSAS (1987)

Ark. Code Ann. § 1-4-117

(a) The English language shall be the official language of the state of Arkansas.

(b) This section shall not prohibit the public schools from performing their duty to provide equal educational opportunities to all children.

CALIFORNIA (1986)

Const. Art. III § 6

Section 1. (a) Purpose: English is the common language of the people of the United States of America and the state of California. This section is intended to preserve, protect and strengthen the English language, and not to supersede any of the rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution.

(b) English as the official language of California.

(c) Enforcement.

The Legislature shall enforce this section by appropriate legislation.

The Legislature and officials of the state of California shall take all steps necessary to insure that the role of English as the common language of the state of California is preserved and enhanced. The Legislature shall make no law which diminishes or ignores the role of English as the common language of the state of California.

(d) Personal Right of Action and Jurisdiction of Courts.

Any person who is a resident of or doing business in the state of California shall have standing to sue the state of California to enforce this section, and the Courts of record of the state of California shall have jurisdiction to hear cases brought to enforce this section. The Legislature may provide reasonable and appropriate limitations on the time and manner of suits brought under this section.

Section 2. Severability: If any provision of this section, or the application of any such provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held invalid, the remainder of this section to the extent it can be given effect shall not be affected thereby, and to this end the provisions of this section are severable.

COLORADO (1988)

Const. Art. II § 30a

The English language is the official language of the state of Colorado.

This section is self-executing; however, the General Assembly may enact laws to implement this section.

FLORIDA (1988)

Const. Art. II § 9

(a) English is the official language of the state of Florida.

(b) The Legislature shall have the power to enforce this section by appropriate legislation

GEORGIA (1996)

Code Ann. § 50-3-100

- a. The English language is designated as the official language of the state of Georgia. The official language shall be the language used for each public record, as defined in Code Section 50-18-70, and each public meeting, as defined in Code Section 50-14-1, and for official Acts of the state of Georgia, including those governmental documents, records, meetings, actions, or policies which are enforceable with the full weight and authority of the state of Georgia.
- b. This Code section shall not be construed in any way to deny a person's rights under the Constitution of Georgia or the Constitution of the United States or any laws, statutes, or regulations of the United States or of the state of Georgia as a result of that person's inability to communicate in the official language.
- c. State agencies, counties, municipal corporations, and political subdivisions of this state are authorized to use or to print official documents and forms in languages other than the official language, at the discretion of their governing authorities. Documents filed or recorded with a state agency or with the clerk of a county, municipal corporation, or

political subdivision must be in the official language or, if the original document is in a language other than the official language, an English translation of the document must be simultaneously filed.

- d. The provisions of subsection (a) of this Code section shall not apply:
1. When in conflict with federal law;
 2. When the public safety, health, or justice require the use of other languages;
 3. To instruction designed to teach the speaking, reading, or writing of foreign languages;
 4. To instruction designed to aid students with limited English proficiency in their transition and integration into the education system of the state; and
 5. To the promotion of international commerce, tourism, sporting events, or cultural events.

HAWAII (1978)

Const Art. XV § 4

English and Hawaiian shall be the official languages of Hawaii, except that Hawaiian shall be required for public acts and transactions only as provided by law.

IDAHO (2007)

Code Ch. 73-121

SECTION 1. That Section 73-121, Idaho Code, be, and the same is hereby amended to read as follows:

73-121. CERTAIN DOCUMENTS TO BE IN ENGLISH THE OFFICIAL STATE LANGUAGE.

- (1) English is hereby declared to be the official language of the state of Idaho.
- (2) Except as provided in this section, the English language is the sole language of the government.
- (3) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, any document, certificate or instrument required to be filed, recorded or endorsed by any officer of this state, or of any county, city or district in this state, shall be in the English language or shall be accompanied by a certified translation in English and all transactions, proceedings, meetings or publications issued, conducted or regulated by, or on behalf of, or representing the state of Idaho, or any county, city or other political subdivision in this state shall be in the English language.
- (4) Language other than English may be used when required:
- (a) By the United States Constitution, the Idaho Constitution, federal law or federal regulation;
- (b) By law enforcement or public health and safety needs;
- (c) By public schools according to the rules promulgated by the state board of education pursuant to subsection (6) of this section;
- (d) By the public postsecondary educational institutions to pursue educational purposes;
- (e) To promote and encourage tourism and economic development, including the hosting of international events;
- (f) To change the use of non-English terms of art, phrases, proper names or expressions included as part of communication otherwise in English; and
- (g) By libraries to:
- (i) Collect and promote foreign language materials; and
 - (ii) Provide foreign language services and activities.
- (5) Unless exempted by subsection (4) of this section, all state funds appropriated or designated for the printing or translation of materials or the provision of services or information in a language other than English shall be returned to the state general fund.
- (a) Each state agency that has state funds appropriated or designated for the printing or translation of materials or the provision of services or information in a language other than English shall:
- (i) Notify the state controller that those moneys exist and the amount of those moneys; and
 - (ii) Return those moneys to the state controller for deposit into the state general fund.
- (b) The state controller shall account for those moneys and inform the legislature of the existence and amount of those moneys at the beginning of the legislature's annual general session.

(6) The state board of education shall make rules governing the use of foreign languages in the public schools that promote the following principles:

- (a) Non-English speaking children and adults should become able to read, write and understand English as quickly as possible;
- (b) Foreign language instruction should be encouraged;
- (c) Formal and informal programs in English as a second language should be initiated, continued and expanded; and
- (d) Public schools should establish communication with non-English speaking parents within their systems, using a means designed to maximize understanding when necessary, while encouraging those parents who do not speak English to become more proficient in English.

(7) Nothing in this section shall restrict the rights of governmental employees, private businesses, not-for-profit organizations or private individuals to exercise their right under the first amendment of the United States constitution or section 9, article I, of the Idaho constitution.

SECTION 2. SEVERABILITY. The provisions of this act are hereby declared to be severable and if any provision of this act or the application of such provision to any person or circumstance is declared invalid for any reason, such declaration shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this act.

ILLINOIS (1969)

5 ILCS 460/20

The official language of the state of Illinois is English.

INDIANA (1984)

Code Ch. 10 § 1

The English language is adopted as the official language of the state of Indiana.

IOWA (2002)

Code Ch. 1.18, Ch. 4.14

1. The general assembly of the state of Iowa finds and declares the following:
 - a. The state of Iowa is comprised of individuals from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. The state of Iowa encourages the assimilation of Iowans into Iowa's rich culture.
 - b. Throughout the history of Iowa and of the United States, the common thread binding individuals of differing backgrounds together has been the English language.
 - c. Among the powers reserved to each state is the power to establish the English language as the official language of the state, and otherwise to promote the English language within the state, subject to the prohibitions enumerated in the Constitution of the United States and in laws of the state.
2. In order to encourage every citizen of this state to become more proficient in the English language, thereby facilitating participation in the economic, political, and cultural activities of this state and of the United States, the English language is hereby declared to be the official language of the state of Iowa.
3. Except as otherwise provided for in subsections 4 and 5, the English language shall be the language of government in Iowa. All official documents, regulations, orders, transactions, proceedings, programs, meetings, publications, or actions taken or issued, which are conducted or regulated by, or on behalf of, or representing the state and all of its political subdivisions shall be in the English language. For the purposes of this section, "official action" means any action taken by the government in Iowa or by an authorized officer or agent of the government in Iowa that does any of the following:
 - a. Binds the government.
 - b. Is required by law.

- c. Is otherwise subject to scrutiny by either the press or the public.
- 4. This section shall not apply to:
 - a. The teaching of languages.
 - b. Requirements under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
 - c. Actions, documents, or policies necessary for trade, tourism, or commerce.
 - d. Actions or documents that protect the public health and safety.
 - e. Actions or documents that facilitate activities pertaining to compiling any census of populations.
 - f. Actions or documents that protect the rights of victims of crimes or criminal defendants.
 - g. Use of proper names, terms of art, or phrases from languages other than English.
 - h. Any language usage required by or necessary to secure the rights guaranteed by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America or the Constitution of the State of Iowa.
 - i. Any oral or written communications, examinations, or publications produced or utilized by a driver's license station, provided public safety is not jeopardized.
- 5. Nothing in this section shall be construed to do any of the following:
 - a. Prohibit an individual member of the general assembly or officer of state government, while performing official business, from communicating through any medium with another person in a language other than English, if that member or officer deems it necessary or desirable to do so.
 - b. Limit the preservation or use of Native American languages, as defined in the federal Native American Languages Act of 1992.
 - c. Disparage any language other than English or discourage any person from learning or using a language other than English.

- (f) provide instruction designed to aid students with limited English proficiency so they can make a timely transition to use of the English language in the public schools;
- (g) promote international commerce, trade or tourism;
- (h) use terms of art or phrases from languages other than the English language in documents;
- (i) provide signage and documents in braille; and
- (j) communicate in American Sign Language.

73-2803. Construction of act; limitations on governmental restrictions applicable to private sector. This act shall not be construed in any way to infringe upon the rights of citizens under the constitution of the state of Kansas or the constitution of the United States in the use of language in any private activity. No agency or officer of the state or any political or taxing subdivision of the state may place any restrictions or requirements regarding language usage in any business operating in the private sector other than official documents, forms, submissions or other communications directed to government agencies and officers, which communications shall be in the common language as recognized in this act.

73-2804. Same; native Americans. This act may not be construed in any way to limit the use of any other language by a tribal government of native Americans located in the state of Kansas. A school district and a tribe, by mutual agreement, may provide for the instruction of students that recognizes the cultural identity of native American children and promotes the use of a common language for communication.

73-2805. Rights not diminished or expanded. Nothing in this act shall diminish or expand any existing rights under the laws of Kansas or the United States relative to services or materials provided by the government of Kansas in any language other than English.

73-2806. Promotion of English language; assistance for non-native speakers. The state of Kansas recognizes the importance of establishing and actively promoting English language classes, English language training or citizenship classes for non-native speakers. The local entity designated by the state board of regents to offer such services shall seek the assistance of local political subdivisions, community-based agencies and organizations, migrant worker groups, refugee resettlement programs, schools, churches and others in making non-native speakers aware of the availability of such classes and training and ensuring their continuation and expansion.

73-2807. Severability clause. The provisions of this act are severable and any provision held invalid shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions of this act.

KANSAS (2007)

Stat. Ann. §73-28 (2801-2807)

73-2801. English designated official language of state. (a) English shall be designated as the official language of the state of Kansas.

(b) The official language is designated as the language of any official public document or record and any official public meeting:

(1) An official public document or record is any document officially compiled, published or recorded by the state including deeds, publicly probated wills and any other document or record required to be kept open for public inspection pursuant to the open records act.

(2) An official public meeting is any meeting required to be open pursuant to K.S.A. 75-4317 et seq., and amendments thereto.

(c) Except as otherwise provided by law, no state agency or political or taxing subdivision of the state shall be required to provide any documents, information, literature or other written materials in any language other than English. Nothing shall prohibit state agencies or political or taxing subdivisions from: (1) Publishing any official public document or record in languages other than English at their discretion, so long as the document or record is also published in English; or (2) permitting a person who does not speak English to speak or communicate at an official public meeting with the assistance of an interpreter.

73-2802. Use of language other than English. A state agency or political or taxing subdivision, or its officers or employees, may use a language other than the English language to:

(a) Provide information orally to individuals in the course of delivering services to the general public;

(b) comply with federal law;

(c) protect the public health or safety;

(d) protect the rights of parties and witnesses in a civil or criminal action in a court or in an administrative proceeding;

(e) provide instruction in foreign and native American language courses;

KENTUCKY (1984)

Rev. Stat. § 2.013

English is designated as the official state language of Kentucky.

LOUISIANA (1811)

Enabling Act, 2 U.S.Stat. 641 § 3

And be it further enacted, ...that after the admission of the said territory of Orleans as a state into the Union, the laws which such state may pass shall be promulgated and its records of every description shall be preserved, and its judicial and legislative written proceedings conducted in the language in which the laws and the judicial and legislative written proceedings of the United States are now published and conducted...

"It is the opinion of this office that English is the sole official language of Louisiana."

--Richard P. Ieyoub

Attorney General of Louisiana, February 13, 1992

MASSACHUSETTS (1975)

Supreme Court Ruling

Recognized by the Supreme Court of Massachusetts in Commonwealth v. Olivo (1975)

MISSISSIPPI (1987)

Code Ann. § 3-3-31

The English language is the official language of the state of Mississippi.

MISSOURI (2008)

Rev. Stat. § 1.028

The general assembly recognizes that English is the most common language used in Missouri and recognizes that fluency in English is necessary for full integration into our common American culture.

MONTANA (1995)

Code Ann. § 1-1-510

English as official and primary language of state and local governments.

1. English is the official and primary language of:
 - a. the state and local governments;
 - b. government officers and employees acting in the course and scope of their employment; and
 - c. government documents and records.
2. A state statute, local government ordinance, or state or local government policy may not require a language other than English to be used by government officers and employees acting in the course and scope of their employment or for government documents or records or require a language other than English to be taught in a school.
3. This section is not intended to violate the federal or state constitutional right to freedom of speech of government officers and employees acting in the course and scope of their employment. This section does not prohibit a government officer or employee acting in the course and scope of employment from using a language other than English, including use in a government document or record, if the employee chooses, or prohibit the teaching of Native American languages, sign languages, or other languages in a school for general educational purposes.

NEBRASKA (1920)

Const. Art. I § 27

The English language is hereby declared to be the official language of this state, and all official proceedings, records and publications shall be in such language, and the common school branches shall be taught in said language in public, private, denominational and parochial schools.

NEW HAMPSHIRE (1995)

RSA 3-C:1-6

3-C:1 Official State Language.

- I. The official language of the state of New Hampshire shall be English. English is designated as the language of all official public documents and records, and of all public proceedings and nonpublic sessions.
- II. For the purposes of this chapter, "official public documents and records" are all documents officially compiled, published, or recorded by the state.
- III. For the purposes of this chapter, "public proceedings and nonpublic sessions" mean those proceedings and sessions as defined in RSA 91-A, and includes the information recorded at such proceedings and sessions.

3-C:2 Exceptions. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply:

- I. To all public proceedings between the state of New Hampshire and the province of Quebec when, in the opinion of the state administrator involved in such proceedings, it may be necessary to conduct such proceedings between Quebec and New Hampshire wholly or partially in French, and to use official public documents and records during the public proceedings, which are written wholly or partially in French.
- II. To instruction in foreign languages courses.
- III. To instruction designed to aid students with limited English in a timely transition and integration into the general educational system.
- IV. To the promotion of international commerce, tourism, and sporting events.
- V. When deemed to interfere with needs of the justice system.
- VI. When the public safety, health, or emergency services require the use of other languages.

- VII. When expert testimony or witnesses may require a language other than English; provided, however, that for purposes of deliberation, decision making, or recordkeeping, the official version of such testimony or commentary shall be the officially translated English-language version.

3-C:3 Employment. No person shall be denied employment with the state or with any political subdivision of the state based solely upon that person's lack of facility in a foreign language, except when related to bona fide job needs reflected in the exceptions listed in RSA 3-C:2.

3-C:4 Construction. This chapter shall not be construed in any way to infringe on the rights of citizens under the state constitution or the constitution of the United States 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 shall 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 communications shall be in English as recognized in this chapter.

NORTH CAROLINA (1987)

Gen. Stat. Ch. 145 § 12

- a. Purpose. English is the common language of the people of the United States of America and the state of North Carolina. This section is intended to preserve, protect and strengthen the English language, and not to supersede any of the rights guaranteed to the people by the Constitution of the United States or the Constitution of North Carolina.
- b. English as the official Language of North Carolina. English is the official language of the state of North Carolina.

NORTH DAKOTA (1987)

Cent. Code § 54-02-13

English as official language. The English language is the official language of the state of North Dakota.

OKLAHOMA (2010)

State Question 751 (2010 Election)

Section 1. As English is the common and unifying language of the State of Oklahoma, all official actions of the state shall be conducted in the English language, except as required by federal law. No person shall have a cause of action against an agency or political subdivision of this state of failure to provide any official government actions in any language other than English. Nothing in this Article shall be construed to diminish or impair the use, study, development, or encouragement of any Native American language in any context or for any purpose. The Legislature shall have the power to implement, enforce and determine the proper application of this Article by appropriate legislation.

SOUTH CAROLINA (1987)

Code Ann. § 1-1-(696-698)

§ 1-1-696. Official State language.

The English language is the official language of the state of South Carolina.

§ 1-1-697. Use of language other than English prohibited.

Neither this state nor any political subdivision thereof shall require, by law, ordinance, regulation, order, decree, program, or policy, the use of any language other than English; provided, however, that nothing in this act shall prohibit a state agency or a political subdivision of the state from requiring an applicant to have certain degrees of knowledge of a foreign language as a condition of employment where appropriate.

§ 1-1-698. Exceptions to prohibition against use of language other than English.

his act does not prohibit any law, ordinance, regulation, order, decree program, or policy requiring educational instruction in a language other than English for the purpose of making students who use a language other than English proficient in English or making students proficient in a language in addition to English.

SOUTH DAKOTA (1995)

Codified Laws § 1-27-(20-26)

Section 1. The common language of the state is English. The common language is designated as the language of any official public document or record and any official public meeting.

Section 2. For the purposes of this Act, an official public document or record is any document officially compiled, published, or recorded by the state including deeds, publicly probated wills, records of births, deaths, and marriages, and any other document required to be kept open for public inspection pursuant to chapter I-27. An official public meeting is any meeting or proceeding required to be open to the public pursuant to chapter I-25.

Section 3. The provisions of this act do not apply:

- (1) To instruction in foreign languages courses;
- (2) To instruction designed to aid students with limited English proficiency in a timely transition and integration into the general educational system;
- (3) To the promotion of international commerce, tourism, and sporting events;
- (4) When deemed to interfere with needs of the justice system;
- (5) When the public safety, health, or emergency services require the use of other languages. However, any such authorization for the use of a language other than the common language in printing informational materials or publications for general distribution must be approved in an open public meeting pursuant to chapter I-25 by the governing board or authority of the relevant state or municipal entity and the decision shall be recorded in publicly available minutes;
- (6) When expert testimony, witnesses, or speakers require a language other than the common language. However, for purposes of deliberation, decision-making, or record keeping, the official version of such testimony or commentary shall be the officially translated English language version.

Section 4. Pursuant to the exemptions outlined in section 3 of this Act, all costs related to the preparation, translation, printing, and recording of documents, records, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, or other informational materials in languages other than the common language shall be delineated as a separate budget line item in the agency, department, or office budget.

Section 5. No person may be denied employment with the state or any political subdivision of the state based solely upon that person's lack of facility in a foreign language, except where related to bona fide job needs reflected in the exemptions in section 3 of this Act.

Section 6. This Act may not be construed in any way to infringe upon the rights of citizens under the state constitution or the Constitution of the United States in the use of language in any private activity. No agency or officer of the state nor any political subdivision of the state may place any restrictions or requirements regarding language usage in any business operating in the private sector other than official documents, forms, submissions, or other communications directed to government agencies and officers, which communications shall be in the common language as recognized in this Act.

Section 7. Any citizen of the state has standing to bring an action against the state to enforce this act. The circuit court has jurisdiction to hear and decide any such action brought pursuant to this Act.

TENNESSEE (1984)

Code Ann. § 4-1-404

English -- Official and legal language. -- English is hereby established as the official and legal language of Tennessee. All communications and publications, including ballots, produced by governmental entities in Tennessee shall be conducted in English unless the nature of the course would require otherwise.

UTAH (2000)

Ballot Measure, Initiative A, November 2000 Election
Initiative A:

A law enacted to:

1. declare English Utah's official and sole language for state and local government documents and action;
2. exempt those documents and actions required by the United States and Utah constitutions; federal law and regulations; law enforcement, public safety and health requirements;

- public and higher education; certain judicial proceedings; economic development and tourism; and libraries;
3. require public and higher education or enact rules to promote learning and using English and encourage learning foreign language; and
4. return to the General Fund monies appropriated or designated for services in another language, and require accounting.

VIRGINIA (1996)

Code § 7.1-42 & § 22.1-212.1

§ 7.1-42. English shall be designated as the official language of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Except as otherwise provided by law, no state agency or local government shall be required to provide and no state agency or local government shall be prohibited from providing any documents, information, literature or other written materials nor any translators in any language other than English.

§ 22.1-212.1. Pursuant to § 7.1-42, school boards shall have no obligation to teach the standard curriculum, except courses in foreign languages, in a language other than English. School boards shall endeavor to provide instruction in the English language which shall be designed to promote the education of students for whom English is a second language.

WEST VIRGINIA (2016)

Code §2-2-13

2. LEGAL HOLIDAYS; SPECIAL MEMORIAL DAYS; CONSTRUCTION OF STATUTES; DEFINITIONS; LANGUAGE. §2-2-13. Official business and records of the state to be in English; exceptions; definition.

(a) All official business of this state shall be conducted in the English language. All official records, documents, rules, orders, and publications shall be printed in English and all official programs, meetings, transactions, and actions conducted by or on behalf of the state and all its political subdivisions shall be in English.

(b) Other languages may be used by government officials, and in official documents, whenever necessary to:

- (1) Protect public health and safety;
- (2) Teach or study other languages;
- (3) Protect the rights of criminal defendants or victims of crime;
- (4) Promote trade, tourism or commerce;
- (5) Facilitate activities pertaining to the compilation of any census;
- (6) Comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PL 101-476;
- (7) Use proper names, terms of art, legal terms or phrases from languages other than English; or

(8) Comply with the Constitution and laws of the United States of America or the Constitution of West Virginia. Except in exigent circumstances, when an official government document is translated into any language other than English under this section, an English translation shall also be provided in the same document, appearing in such a manner as to afford the reader the opportunity to observe the English translation of all phrases used.

(c) This section may not be construed to:

- (1) Diminish the usage of, prevent the study or development of, or discourage the use of, any Native American language in any context or for any purpose;
- (2) Prohibit an elected official from speaking to any person in a language other than English while campaigning or providing constituent services. However, those officials are encouraged to use English as much as possible to promote fluency in English;
- (3) Disparage any language or discourage any person from learning or using any language; or
- (4) Prohibit informal and nonbinding translations or communications among or between representatives of government and other persons if the activity does not affect or impair supervision, management, conduct, or execution of official actions and if the representatives of government make clear that these translations or communications are unofficial and not binding on the state or any political subdivision of the state.

(d) Any examination related to employment administered by any state, municipal or county entity may be administered in a language other than English if the test is available in that language.

(e) As used in this section, "official" means any government action or document that binds the government, is required by law, or is authorized by law.

WYOMING (1996)

State Code 8-6-101

8-6-101. English as the official language of Wyoming.

- a. English shall be designated as the official language of Wyoming. Except as otherwise provided by law, no state agency or political subdivision of the state shall be required to provide any documents, information, literature or other written materials nor any translators in any language other than English.
- b. A state agency or political subdivision or its officers may act in a language other than the English language for any of the following purposes:
 - i. To provide information orally to individuals in the course of delivering services to the general public;
 - ii. To comply with federal law;
 - iii. To protect the public health;
 - iv. To protect the rights of parties and witnesses in a civil or criminal action in a court or in an administrative proceeding;
 - v. To provide instruction in foreign and Native American language courses;
 - vi. To provide instruction designed to aid students with limited English proficiency so they can make a timely transition to use of the English language in public schools;
 - vii. To promote international commerce, trade or tourism;
 - viii. To use terms of art or phrases from languages other than the English language in documents.