

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 49th Legislature (2003)

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 1020

By: Kirby

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

An Act relating to the English language; enacting the Oklahoma English Language Act; providing for an official language of Oklahoma; requiring the business of this state be done in the official language; providing exceptions; providing for codification; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 401 of Title 25, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma English Language Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 402 of Title 25, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. The English language is the official language of the State of Oklahoma.

B. All official business of this state will be conducted in English absent compelling circumstances.

C. Other languages may be used by government officials, and in official documents, whenever necessary to:

1. Protect the health, safety, or liberty of any citizen;
2. Teach or study other languages;
3. Protect the rights of criminal defendants or the 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;

7. Use proper names, terms of art, 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 the State of Oklahoma.

Except in exigent circumstances, when an official government document is translated into any language other than English under this section, an English translation will 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.

D. Nothing in this section shall 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 any elected official from speaking to any person in a language other than English while campaigning or providing constituent services, although such officials are encouraged to use English as much as possible to promote fluency in English; or

3. Disparage any language other than English, or discourage any person from learning or using a language other than English.

SECTION 3. This act shall become effective November 1, 2003.

49-1-6418

GH

02/18/03