

104<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 345

To amend title 4, United States Code, to declare English as the official language of the Government of the United States and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that public ceremonies for the admission of new citizens shall be considered solely in English.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 1995

Mr. PICKETT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities and, in addition, to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## A BILL

To amend title 4, United States Code, to declare English as the official language of the Government of the United States and to amend the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide that public ceremonies for the admission of new citizens shall be considered solely in English.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Language of Govern-  
3 ment Act of 1995”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND CONSTRUCTION.**

5 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds and declares—

6 (1) that the United States is comprised of indi-  
7 viduals and groups from diverse ethnic, cultural, and  
8 linguistic backgrounds;

9 (2) that the United States has benefited and  
10 continues to benefit from this rich diversity;

11 (3) that throughout the history of the Nation,  
12 the common thread binding those of differing back-  
13 grounds has been a common language;

14 (4) that in order to preserve unity in diversity,  
15 and to prevent division along linguistic lines, the  
16 United States should maintain a language common  
17 to all people;

18 (5) that English has historically been the com-  
19 mon language and the language of opportunity in  
20 the United States;

21 (6) that the use of a single common language  
22 in the conduct of the Government’s official business  
23 will promote efficiency and fairness to all people;  
24 and

25 (7) that English should be recognized in law as  
26 the language of official business of the Government.

1 (b) CONSTRUCTION.—The amendments made by sec-  
2 tion 3—

3 (1) are not intended in any way to discriminate  
4 against or restrict the rights of any individual in the  
5 United States;

6 (2) are not intended to discourage or prevent  
7 the use of languages other than English in any  
8 nonofficial capacity; and

9 (3) except where an existing law of the United  
10 States directly contravenes the amendments made by  
11 section 3 (such as by requiring the use of a language  
12 other than English for official business of the Gov-  
13 ernment of the United States), are not intended to  
14 repeal existing laws of the United States.

15 **SEC. 3. ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF GOVERN-**  
16 **MENT.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title 4, United States Code, is  
18 amended by adding at the end the following new chapter:

19 **“CHAPTER 6—LANGUAGE OF THE**  
20 **GOVERNMENT**

“Sec.

“161. Declaration of official language of Government.

“162. Preserving and enhancing the role of the official language.

“163. Official Government activities in English.

“164. Standing.

“165. Definitions.

1 **“§ 161. Declaration of official language of Govern-**  
2 **ment**

3 “The official language of the Government of the  
4 United States is English.

5 **“§ 162. Preserving and enhancing the role of the offi-**  
6 **cial language**

7 “The Government shall have an affirmative obligation  
8 to preserve and enhance the role of English as the official  
9 language of the United States Government. Such obliga-  
10 tion shall include encouraging greater opportunities for in-  
11 dividuals to learn the English language.

12 **“§ 163. Official Government activities in English**

13 “(a) CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.—The Government  
14 shall conduct its official business in English.

15 “(b) DENIAL OF SERVICES.—No person shall be de-  
16 nied services, assistance, or facilities, directly or indirectly  
17 provided by the Government solely because the person  
18 communicates in English.

19 “(c) ENTITLEMENT.—Every person in the United  
20 States is entitled to—

21 “(1) communicate with the Government in Eng-  
22 lish;

23 “(2) receive information from or contribute in-  
24 formation to the Government in English; and

25 “(3) be informed of or be subject to official or-  
26 ders in English.

1 **“§ 164. Standing**

2 “Any person alleging injury arising from a violation  
3 of this chapter shall have standing to sue in the courts  
4 of the United States under sections 2201 and 2202 of title  
5 28, United States Code, and for such other relief as may  
6 be considered appropriate by the courts.

7 **“§ 165. Definitions**

8 “For purposes of this chapter:

9 “(1) GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘Government’  
10 means all branches of the Government of the United  
11 States and all employees and officials of the Govern-  
12 ment of the United States while performing official  
13 business.

14 “(2) OFFICIAL BUSINESS.—The term ‘official  
15 business’ means those governmental actions, docu-  
16 ments, or policies which are enforceable with the full  
17 weight and authority of the Government, but does  
18 not include—

19 “(A) actions or documents that are pri-  
20 marily informational or educational;

21 “(B) actions, documents, or policies that  
22 are not enforceable in the United States;

23 “(C) actions, documents, or policies nec-  
24 essary for international relations, trade, or com-  
25 merce;



1 **SEC. 5. PREEMPTION.**

2       This Act (and the amendments made by this Act)

3 shall not preempt any law of any State.

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