
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 902 Session of
2025

INTRODUCED BY DAVANZO, HAMM, KAUFFMAN, KUZMA, M. MACKENZIE,
ROAE, TWARDZIK, WARNER AND ZIMMERMAN, MARCH 13, 2025

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 13, 2025

AN ACT

1 Providing for the English language as the official language of
2 the Commonwealth; and imposing a certain restriction on use
3 of appropriated funds.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Official
8 Language Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative findings.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) The English language is the common and traditional
12 language of the United States and this Commonwealth.

13 (2) The use of a common language removes barriers of
14 misunderstanding and helps to unify the citizens of the
15 United States and this Commonwealth.

16 (3) A compelling State interest exists in promoting,
17 preserving and strengthening the use of the English language.

18 (4) The Commonwealth should promote proficiency in the

1 English language to enable the full economic and civic
2 participation of all of its residents.

3 (5) A knowledge of the common language is essential to
4 full exercise of constitutional freedoms, informed and
5 knowledgeable empowerment as voters, citizen checks against
6 government abuses and individual prosperity and independence.

7 (6) The English language has been our strongest bond to
8 one another as fellow citizens and has contributed
9 substantially to national unity and societal cohesiveness.

10 (7) English has been this nation's language by custom
11 only and warrants special legal protection.

12 (8) Government has a fiduciary responsibility to the
13 citizenry to ensure that it operates as efficiently as
14 possible, and the growth of multiple language bureaucracies
15 and printing represents an abrogation of this fiduciary
16 responsibility.

17 (9) The Commonwealth and its municipalities and the
18 Federal Government also have a responsibility to ensure that
19 citizens have opportunities to learn English.

20 (10) Among the powers reserved to this Commonwealth is
21 the power to establish the English language as this
22 Commonwealth's official language and to promote the use of
23 the English language within this Commonwealth.

24 Section 3. Purpose.

25 (a) Unifying role.--It is the purpose of this act to
26 preserve, protect and strengthen the unifying role of English as
27 the official language of this Commonwealth.

28 (b) Rights preserved.--This act shall not be construed to
29 infringe on the rights of citizens, who have every right to
30 choose their own primary language, in the use of language for

1 private conduct, nor shall this act be used to dictate language
2 policies for the operation and administration of organizations
3 or businesses in the unregulated private sector.

4 Section 4. Definitions.

5 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
6 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
7 context clearly indicates otherwise:

8 "Official acts of government." Any of the following:

9 (1) Actions of the Commonwealth and of its political
10 subdivisions that carry the full weight and authority of law.

11 (2) Orders, regulations, rules, statements of policy,
12 adjudications, certificates, licenses, permits, notices,
13 instruments or official documents issued, prescribed or
14 promulgated by or under the authority of the Commonwealth and
15 of its political subdivisions.

16 Section 5. Designation of language of official acts.

17 English is recognized as the official language of the
18 Commonwealth and shall also be designated as the language of
19 official acts of government.

20 Section 6. Policies.

21 Subject to the limitations in section 8, the Commonwealth and
22 its political subdivisions may not make policies expressing a
23 preference for any language other than English or diminishing or
24 ignoring the unifying role of English as designated in this act.

25 Section 7. Enforcement.

26 Elected and appointed officers of the Commonwealth and its
27 political subdivisions shall take all reasonable steps to ensure
28 that the role of English as the official language is preserved
29 and enhanced.

30 Section 8. Limitations.

1 The provisions of this act shall not apply to the following:

2 (1) When Federal law imposes contrary provisions.

3 (2) When the public safety, health or justice requires
4 the use of other languages.

5 (3) Instruction in foreign language courses.

6 (4) Instruction designed to aid students with limited
7 English proficiency in their transition and integration into
8 the education system.

9 (5) The promotion of international commerce or tourism.

10 (6) When using terms of art or phrases from languages
11 other than English.

12 (7) The preservation or use of Native Alaskan or Native
13 American languages as defined in the Native American
14 Languages Act (Public Law 101-477, 104 Stat. 1153) or 20
15 U.S.C. Ch. 33 (relating to education of individuals with
16 disabilities).

17 (8) The creation or promotion of a State motto or State
18 agency motto, the inscription of public monuments or the
19 performance of other acts involving the customary use of
20 languages other than English.

21 (9) The protection of the rights of criminal defendants
22 or victims of crime.

23 (10) Unofficial communications, through any medium,
24 between an individual and a member of the General Assembly or
25 any officer or agent of the Commonwealth and its political
26 subdivisions.

27 Section 9. Restrictions on use of appropriated money.

28 Subject to the limitations in section 8, an appropriation of
29 the General Assembly may not be expended to promote the use of
30 or demonstrate a preference for any language other than the

1 official language.

2 Section 10. Effective date.

3 This act shall take effect in 90 days.