

Legislative Analysis



ENGLISH AS OFFICIAL STATE LANGUAGE

Phone: (517) 373-8080
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House Bill 4053 as reported from committee

Sponsor: Rep. Tom Barrett

Committee: Government Operations

Complete to 12-13-17

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

The bill would create a new act designating English as the official language of Michigan.

The bill would require that English be the language used for each public record, as defined in the Freedom of Information Act; each meeting, as defined in the Open Meetings Act; and official acts of the state, including those governmental documents, records, meetings, actions, or policies legally enforceable in the state.

However, in addition to printing official documents and forms in English, a state agency or local unit of government could use or print official documents and forms in languages other than English.

A document filed or recorded with a state agency or with a local unit of government would have to be in English, or, if the original document is in a language other than English, an English translation must be filed simultaneously.

The act would not apply if there were a conflict with federal law or if the public safety required the use of languages other than English. Further, the act would not apply to any of the following:

- Instruction designed to teach the speaking, reading, or writing of foreign languages.
- Instruction designed to aid students with limited English proficiency in their transition and integration into the education system of the state.
- The promotion of international commerce, tourism, sporting events, or cultural events.

The bill also states that the new act is not to be construed in any way to deny a person's rights under the State Constitution of 1963 or the Constitution of the United States or any state or federal law as a result of that person's inability to communicate in English.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would appear to have no direct fiscal impact on the state or local governments.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan League for Public Policy indicated opposition to the bill. (6-20-17)

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) submitted written testimony opposing the bill. (6-20-17)

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