
SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 8220

State of Washington 62nd Legislature 2012 Regular Session

By Senators Benton, Holmquist Newbry, Stevens, Morton, and Carrell

Read first time 01/09/12. Referred to Committee on Government Operations, Tribal Relations & Elections.

1 BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 STATE OF WASHINGTON, IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION ASSEMBLED:

3 THAT, At the next general election to be held in this state the
4 secretary of state shall submit to the qualified voters of the state
5 for their approval and ratification, or rejection, an amendment to
6 Article III of the Constitution of the state of Washington by adding a
7 new section to read as follows:

8 Article III, section . . . (1) The English language is the
9 official language of the state.

10 (2) All official business of this state must be conducted in
11 English. All official documents, rules, orders, and publications must
12 be printed in English and all official programs, meetings,
13 transactions, and actions conducted by or on behalf of the state and
14 all its political subdivisions must be in English.

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

- 17 (a) Protect the health, safety, or liberty of any citizen;
18 (b) Teach or study other languages;
19 (c) Protect the rights of criminal defendants or victims of crime;

1 (d) Promote trade, tourism, or commerce;

2 (e) Facilitate activities pertaining to the compilation of any
3 census;

4 (f) Comply with the federal individuals with disabilities education
5 act;

6 (g) Use proper names, terms of art, or phrases from languages other
7 than English; or

8 (h) Comply with the Constitution and laws of the United States of
9 America or this Constitution.

10 Except in exigent circumstances, when an official government
11 document is translated into any language other than English under this
12 section, an English translation must also be provided in the same
13 document, appearing in such a manner as to afford the reader the
14 opportunity to observe the English translation of all phrases used.

15 (4) This section may not be construed to:

16 (a) Diminish the usage of, prevent the study or development of, or
17 discourage the use of, any native American language in any contest or
18 for any purpose;

19 (b) Prohibit an elected official from speaking to any person in a
20 language other than English while campaigning or providing constituent
21 services; although such officials are encouraged to use English as much
22 as possible to promote fluency in English;

23 (c) Disparage any language or discourage any person from learning
24 or using any language; or

25 (d) Prohibit informal and nonbinding translations or communications
26 among or between representatives of government and other persons if the
27 activity does not affect or impair supervision, management, conduct, or
28 execution of official actions and if the representatives of government
29 make clear that these translations or communications are unofficial and
30 not binding on the state or any political subdivision of the state.

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

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the secretary of state shall cause
35 notice of this constitutional amendment to be published at least four
36 times during the four weeks next preceding the election in every legal

1 newspaper in the state.

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