



State of Wisconsin
2013 - 2014 LEGISLATURE



LRB-2041/1
SRM:sac:ph

2013 ASSEMBLY BILL 340

August 23, 2013 – Introduced by Representatives JACQUE, NYGREN, BORN, CRAIG, KAUFERT, KERKMAN, NASS, A. OTT and PRIDEMORE, cosponsored by Senators DARLING and GROTHMAN. Referred to Committee on State Affairs.

1 **AN ACT** *to create* 1.101, 1.103 and 1.104 of the statutes; **relating to:** an official
2 state language, use of English for governmental written expression, acquiring
3 language proficiency, and use of languages for nongovernmental purposes.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill provides that the official language of this state is English. Currently, this state has no official language.

The bill also provides that, unless otherwise specifically required by law, all written expression by all units of state and local government in this state shall be in the English language, except that such expression may be in another language when appropriate to the circumstances of an individual case, the implementation of a program in a specific instance, or the discharge of a responsibility in a particular situation. The bill also permits governmental officers and employees to use a language other than English in oral or written expression whenever necessary for one or more of eight specified purposes.

In addition, the bill precludes any unit of state or local government in this state from prohibiting any person from becoming proficient in any language or restricting the oral or written use of any language for a nongovernmental purpose. Currently, such action is prohibited under the federal and state constitutions, except that a

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governmental employer may regulate the conduct of employees while the employees are engaged in official responsibilities.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

1 **SECTION 1.** 1.101 of the statutes is created to read:

2 **1.101 Official state language.** The official language of this state is English.

3 **SECTION 2.** 1.103 of the statutes is created to read:

4 **1.103 Use of English for governmental written expression.** (1) Unless
5 otherwise specifically authorized or required by law and except as authorized in sub.
6 (2), all written expression by all units of state and local government in this state shall
7 be in the English language, except that such expression may be in another language
8 when appropriate to the circumstances of an individual case, the implementation of
9 a program in a specific instance, or the discharge of a responsibility in a particular
10 situation.

11 (2) Governmental officers and employees may use a language other than
12 English in oral or written communication whenever necessary for any of the
13 following purposes:

14 (a) To protect the health, safety, or liberty of any citizen.

15 (b) To teach or study another language.

16 (c) To protect the rights of a criminal defendant or victim of a crime.

17 (d) To promote trade, tourism, or commerce.

18 (e) To facilitate activities relating to the compilation of any census.

19 (f) To comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20
20 USC 1400 et seq.).

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1 (g) To use a proper name, term of art, or phrase from a language other than
2 English.

3 (h) To comply with the constitution and laws of the United States or the
4 constitution of this state.

5 **SECTION 3.** 1.104 of the statutes is created to read:

6 **1.104 Use of other languages.** No unit of state or local government in this
7 state may prohibit any person from becoming proficient in any language or restrict
8 the oral or written use of any language for a nongovernmental purpose.

9 (END)