



State of Wisconsin
2019 - 2020 LEGISLATURE

LRB-0265/1
MPG:klm

2019 SENATE BILL 739

January 29, 2020 - Introduced by Senators JACQUE, NASS, CRAIG, KAPENGA and MARKLEIN, cosponsored by Representatives BRANDTJEN, NEYLON, GUNDRUM and ZIMMERMAN. Referred to Committee on Government Operations, Technology and Consumer Protection.

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

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill provides that the official language of this state is English. Currently, the 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 government 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.

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

SENATE BILL 739**SECTION 1**

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)** Government officers and employees may use a language other than English
12 in oral or written communication whenever necessary for any of the following
13 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 under 20 USC 1400 et seq.

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

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

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

