

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 699

Expressing support for the recognition of April as “National Language Access Month”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 29, 2026

Mr. PADILLA submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the recognition of April as “National
Language Access Month”.

Whereas over 71,000,000 individuals ages 5 and older in the
United States speak a language other than English at
home;

Whereas over 25,700,000 individuals in the United States
have limited English proficiency (LEP) and rely on
translation and interpretation services to access vital pub-
lic services and institutions;

Whereas studies show that 47 percent of all immigrant adults
in the United States have LEP;

Whereas, according to a 2017–2021 Census Bureau estimate,
there are at least 500 individual languages and language
groups spoken in the United States;

Whereas about 30 percent of Asian-American adults, 12 percent of Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander adults, 32 percent of Hispanic adults, 3 percent of Black adults, and 1 percent of White adults reported having LEP;

Whereas nearly 9 percent of the United States population are individuals with LEP, with some States and territories having even higher rates, including—

- (1) 54 percent of residents in American Samoa;
- (2) 20 percent of residents in California;
- (3) 14 percent of residents in Texas;
- (4) 12 percent of residents in New York;
- (5) 12 percent of residents in Florida; and
- (6) 9 percent of residents in Puerto Rico;

Whereas the term “language access” means the provision of culturally competent and effective language services to an individual with LEP designed to enhance that individual’s access to, understanding of, or benefit from services, activities, and programs;

Whereas uneven coverage and implementation of language access contribute to significant disparities for individuals seeking—

- (1) employment services;
- (2) transportation services;
- (3) financial services;
- (4) health services;
- (5) housing services;
- (6) legal services; and
- (7) other services;

Whereas 31 percent of immigrants with LEP report that language barriers interfere with their ability to access health care services;

Whereas 29 percent of immigrants with LEP report that language barriers affect their ability to find or maintain employment;

Whereas 25 percent of immigrants with LEP report difficulty applying for government financial assistance for food, housing, or health coverage;

Whereas 22 percent of immigrants with LEP report that language barriers have made it difficult to report a crime or seek assistance from law enforcement;

Whereas existing legislation protecting language access is integral to ensuring that all Americans can access federally funded programs and policies;

Whereas title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq.) prohibits recipients of Federal funding from discriminating based on national origin;

Whereas the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.), originally the Food Stamp Act of 1964, requires that State agencies utilize bilingual personnel and appropriate printed materials when there are a large number of low-income households that speak a language other than English;

Whereas the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.) requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency to account for the needs of people with LEP in disaster planning and prohibits discrimination on the basis of English proficiency when providing assistance;

Whereas section 1557 of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (42 U.S.C. 18116) prohibits discrimination based on nationality and requires language assistance in

the 15 most common languages for health-related programs;

Whereas section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10503) requires certain counties and jurisdictions to provide bilingual voting assistance in communities with large numbers of language minorities and LEP citizens;

Whereas, for nearly 25 years, both Republican and Democratic Presidents have affirmed the importance of language access through the implementation of Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to English Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency”, which required Federal agencies and grantees to examine the services they provide and provide individuals with LEP “meaningful access” to agency services;

Whereas the California Department of Education recognizes April as National Bilingual/Multilingual Learner Advocacy Month;

Whereas many States and local governments, including the States of New York and Hawaii, recognize April as Language Access Month; and

Whereas the purpose of Language Access Month is to increase awareness and celebrate the importance of language access to ensure equitable access to public services and programs for all Americans, including individuals with LEP: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports the recognition of “National Lan-
3 guage Access Month”;

1 (2) affirms the importance of meaningful lan-
2 guage access in ensuring equitable participation in
3 Federal programs and services;

4 (3) encourages Federal agencies, States, local
5 governments, and community organizations to pro-
6 mote awareness of language access rights and re-
7 sources; and

8 (4) encourages the people of the United States
9 to observe National Language Access Month with
10 appropriate ceremonies, programs, and activities.

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