WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §2-2-13

§2-2-13. Official business and records of the state to be in English; exceptions; definition.

(a) All official business of this state shall be conducted in the English language. All official records, documents, rules, orders, and publications shall be printed in English and all official programs, meetings, transactions, and actions conducted by or on behalf of the state and all its political subdivisions shall be in English.

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

(1) Protect public health and safety;

(2) Teach or study other languages;

(3) Protect the rights of criminal defendants or victims of crime;

(4) Promote trade, tourism or commerce;

(5) Facilitate activities pertaining to the compilation of any census;

(6) Comply with the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, PL 101-476;

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

(8) Comply with the Constitution and laws of the United States of America or the Constitution of West Virginia. Except in exigent circumstances, when an official government document is translated into any language other than English under this section, an English translation shall also be provided in the same document, appearing in such a manner as to afford the reader the opportunity to observe the English translation of all phrases used.

(c) This section may not be construed to:

(1) Diminish the usage of, prevent the study or development of, or discourage the use of, any Native American language in any context or for any purpose;

(2) Prohibit an elected official from speaking to any person in a language other than English while campaigning or providing constituent services. However, those officials are encouraged to use English as much as possible to promote fluency in English;

(3) Disparage any language or discourage any person from learning or using any language; or

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

(d) Any examination related to employment administered by any state, municipal or county entity may be administered in a language other than English if the test is available in that language.

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

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