



(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To modify certain notice requirements, to study certain election requirements,
to clarify certain election requirements, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. WILLIAMS of Georgia introduced the following bill; which was referred to
the Committee on _____

A BILL

To modify certain notice requirements, to study certain elec-
tion requirements, to clarify certain election require-
ments, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Expanding the Vol-
5 untary Opportunities for Translations in Elections Act”
6 or the “Expanding the VOTE Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. LANGUAGE MINORITY NOTICE REQUIREMENTS.**

2 Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52
3 U.S.C. 10503) is amended—

4 (1) by redesignating subsection (e) as sub-
5 section (g); and

6 (2) by inserting after subsection (d) the fol-
7 lowing new subsections:

8 “(e) RESPONSIBILITY OF STATES PROVIDING VOT-
9 ING MATERIALS IN COVERED POLITICAL SUBDIVI-
10 SIONS.—The prohibition under subsection (b) shall apply
11 to any State that provides voting materials to a political
12 subdivision subject to such prohibition.

13 “(f) NOTICE.—The Attorney General shall submit a
14 notice of the prohibition of subsection (b), and the thresh-
15 old at which such prohibition applies, to each State or po-
16 litical subdivision that is—

17 “(1) below the threshold requirement under
18 subclause (II) of subsection (b)(2)(A)(i) by not more
19 than 1,000; or

20 “(2) below the threshold requirement under
21 subclause (I) or (III) of subsection (b)(2)(A)(i) by
22 not more than 0.5 percent.”.

1 **SEC. 3. PROVISIONS RELATED TO AMERICAN INDIAN AND**
2 **ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES.**

3 Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (52
4 U.S.C. 10503), as amended by section 2, is further
5 amended—

6 (1) in subsection (b)(3)(C), by striking “1990”
7 and inserting “most recent”; and

8 (2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the
9 following:

10 “(c) PROVISION OF VOTING MATERIALS IN THE LAN-
11 GUAGE OF A MINORITY GROUP.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2),
13 whenever any State or political subdivision subject to
14 the prohibition of subsection (b), provides any reg-
15 istration or voting notices, forms, instructions, as-
16 sistance, or other materials or information relating
17 to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall
18 provide them in the language of the applicable mi-
19 nority group as well as in the English language.

20 “(2) EXCEPTIONS.—

21 “(A) WHEN WRITTEN AMERICAN INDIAN
22 AND ALASKA NATIVE TRANSLATIONS FOR VOT-
23 ERS ARE NOT REQUIRED.—In the case of a mi-
24 nority group that is American Indian or Alaska
25 Native, if the Tribal government of that minor-
26 ity group has notified the Attorney General that

1 the language is unwritten or the Tribal govern-
2 ment does not want a written translation, a
3 State or political subdivision subject to the pro-
4 hibition of subsection (b) shall only be required
5 to furnish that minority group, in the covered
6 language, oral instructions, assistance, trans-
7 lation of voting materials, and other informa-
8 tion relating to registration and voting.

9 “(B) OTHER MINORITY GROUPS WITH UN-
10 WRITTEN LANGUAGE.—In the case of a minor-
11 ity group that is not American Indian or Alaska
12 Native, if the language of that minority group
13 is unwritten, a State or political subdivision
14 subject to the prohibition of subsection (b) shall
15 only be required to furnish that minority group,
16 in the covered language, oral instructions, as-
17 sistance, translation of voting materials, and
18 other information relating to registration and
19 voting.

20 “(3) WRITTEN TRANSLATIONS FOR ELECTION
21 WORKERS.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2), a State
22 or political division subject to the prohibition of sub-
23 section (b) shall provide written translations of all
24 voting materials, with the consent of any applicable
25 Tribal government, to election workers to ensure

1 that the translations from English to the language
2 of a minority group are complete, accurate, and uni-
3 form.

4 “(4) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT DEFINED.—In this
5 subsection, the term ‘Tribal government’ means the
6 recognized governing body of any Indian or Alaska
7 Native Tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, commu-
8 nity, component band, or component reservation, in-
9 dividually identified (including parenthetically) in
10 the list published most recently as of the date of en-
11 actment of the Expanding the VOTE Act pursuant
12 to section 104 of the Federally Recognized Indian
13 Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5131).”.

14 **SEC. 4. GRANTS TO JURISDICTIONS TO INCENTIVIZE THE**
15 **PROVISION OF VOTING MATERIALS IN LAN-**
16 **GUAGES NOT TRIGGERING SECTION 203 COV-**
17 **ERAGE IN APPLYING JURISDICTION.**

18 (a) AVAILABILITY OF GRANTS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Election Assistance
20 Commission (in this section, referred to as the
21 “Commission”) shall make incentive grants under
22 subsection (b) to States and political subdivisions to
23 assist the States and political subdivisions in pro-
24 viding voting materials during an election cycle in
25 the language of a covered language minority group.

1 (2) APPLICATION REQUIRED.—In order to re-
2 ceive a grant under this section, a State or political
3 subdivision shall submit to the Commission, at such
4 time and in such form as the Commission may re-
5 quire, an application containing such information
6 and assurances as the Commission may require,
7 such as a plan for the State or political subdivision
8 to engage stakeholders with a demonstrated experi-
9 ence of serving the relevant covered language minor-
10 ity group.

11 (b) INCENTIVE GRANTS.—

12 (1) USE OF FUNDS.—The Commission shall
13 make an incentive grant under this subsection to a
14 State or political subdivision to cover the reasonable
15 costs incurred by the State or political subdivision in
16 providing voting materials in the language of a cov-
17 ered language minority group for an election cycle.

18 (2) CONTINUATION OF PROVISION OF MATE-
19 RIALS FOR GROUPS IN SUCCEEDING ELECTION CY-
20 CLES.—If a State or political subdivision receives an
21 incentive grant with respect to a covered language
22 minority group for an election cycle, the State or po-
23 litical subdivision will certify to the Commission that
24 the State or political subdivision will continue to
25 provide voting materials in the language of that cov-

1 ered language minority group for each succeeding
2 election cycle unless the population of the group dur-
3 ing the succeeding cycle has dropped by 0.5 percent
4 or more from the population of the group during the
5 first election cycle for which the State or political
6 subdivision received an incentive grant with respect
7 to the group.

8 (3) PROHIBITING MULTIPLE GRANTS FOR SAME
9 LANGUAGE MINORITY GROUP.—If a State or political
10 subdivision receives an incentive grant with respect
11 to a covered language minority group, the State or
12 subdivision may not receive another incentive grant
13 with respect to that same covered language minority
14 group.

15 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

16 (1) the term “covered language minority
17 group”—

18 (A) means, with respect to a State or polit-
19 ical subdivision, the members of a single lan-
20 guage minority who do not meet the require-
21 ments of clause (i) or (ii) of section
22 203(b)(2)(A) of the Voting Rights Act of 1965
23 (52 U.S.C. 10503(b)(2)(A)); and

24 (B) includes the language minorities de-
25 scribed in section 203(g) of such Act (52

1 U.S.C. 10503(g)) and any other language mi-
2 nority;

3 (2) the term “election cycle” means the period
4 which begins on the day after the date of a regularly
5 scheduled general election for Federal office and
6 which ends on the date of the next regularly sched-
7 uled general election for Federal office;

8 (3) the term “State” means each of the several
9 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth
10 of Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands,
11 American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of
12 the Northern Mariana Islands; and

13 (4) the term “voting materials” has the mean-
14 ing given under section 203(b)(3)(A) of the Voting
15 Rights Act of 1065 (52 U.S.C. 10503(b)(3)(A)).

16 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
17 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
18 \$15,000,000, to remain available until expended.

19 **SEC. 5. STUDY ON CERTAIN LANGUAGE MINORITY NOTICE**
20 **REQUIREMENTS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the
22 United States, in consultation with the Director of the
23 Census, the Attorney General, and the Election Assistance
24 Commission, shall conduct a study on the impact of—

25 (1) reducing the threshold requirement—

1 (A) under subclause (II) of section
2 203(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Voting Rights Act of
3 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10503(b)(2)(A)(i)) to 7,500
4 and 5,000, respectively; and

5 (B) under subclause (I) or (III) of section
6 203(b)(2)(A)(i) of the Voting Rights Act of
7 1965 (52 U.S.C. 10503(b)(2)(A)(i)) to 4 per-
8 cent, 3 percent, 2.5 percent, and 2 percent, re-
9 spectively; and

10 (2) expanding the definition of the term “lan-
11 guage minorities” to include native speakers of Ara-
12 bic, French and Haitian Creole, and any other lan-
13 guage that the Comptroller General determines to be
14 appropriate.

15 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
16 of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the
17 United States shall submit to Congress a report on the
18 findings of the study conducted under subsection (a).