

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7223

To improve access to Federal services by individuals with limited English proficiency, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 22, 2026

Ms. MENG (for herself, Ms. CHU, Mr. GOLDMAN of New York, and Mr. VARGAS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To improve access to Federal services by individuals with limited English proficiency, 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 “Language Access for
5 All Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. IMPROVING ACCESS TO FEDERAL SERVICES BY IN-**
7 **DIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PRO-**
8 **FICIENCY.**

9 (a) **ENSURING MEANINGFUL ACCESS.—**

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
2 the date of the enactment of this Act, the head of
3 each agency shall ensure that individuals with LEP
4 can meaningfully access the federally conducted pro-
5 grams and activities of the agency, including by—

6 (A) consistent with any applicable Lan-
7 guage Access Technical Standards established
8 by the agency under subsection (c)—

9 (i) translating each vital document or
10 content created for the public into—

11 (I) any languages the agency fre-
12 quently encounters; and

13 (II) the dominant languages spo-
14 ken in the United States based on
15 current U.S. Census data; and

16 (ii) adding multilingual functionality
17 to agency digital and information tech-
18 nology systems to identify and track the
19 spoken and written language needs of peo-
20 ple who engage with the agency and to
21 provide documents and content in other
22 languages;

23 (B) providing oral interpretation, sight
24 translation, and telephonic or remote interpre-
25 tation services to such individuals;

1 (C) recognizing, as an alternative to using
2 qualified interpreters or translators, the use of
3 demonstrably bilingual staff of the agency that
4 have been assessed and are qualified to deliver
5 accurate and effective communication as an ap-
6 propriate method of providing language assist-
7 ance;

8 (D) acknowledging that, when qualified,
9 such staff may offer service that is faster, more
10 effective, and more cost-efficient than the use of
11 qualified interpreters or translators;

12 (E) notifying the public of the availability
13 of language assistance, including interpreters,
14 translated documents and digital content, and
15 bilingual staff, through the use of multilingual
16 notices, taglines, signage or demonstrably equiv-
17 alent alternatives included on documents and
18 digital content the agency creates for the public
19 and in agency buildings and offices; and

20 (F) training employees of the agency who
21 interact with the public on any policy or proce-
22 dure established by the agency to implement
23 the language access plan established by the
24 agency under subsection (b).

1 (2) PUBLIC COMPLAINT AND TRACKING SYS-
2 TEM.—

3 (A) COMPLAINTS.—The Attorney General
4 shall establish and maintain a publicly acces-
5 sible system for individuals to submit com-
6 plaints to the Attorney General regarding bar-
7 riers to receiving meaningful access, as de-
8 scribed under paragraph (1), from an agency.

9 (B) RESPONSE.—The head of the agency
10 with respect to which the complaint was made
11 shall respond to each complaint that was made
12 not later than 60 days after receipt of the com-
13 plaint from the Attorney General.

14 (C) REPORTS.—The Attorney General
15 shall publish on the website of the Department
16 of Justice an annual report summarizing the
17 complaints made under subparagraph (A),
18 disaggregated by the agency that is the subject
19 of the complaint, the language with respect to
20 which the agency failed to provide access, and
21 the program or activity to which the person is
22 guaranteed meaningful access under paragraph
23 (1).

24 (b) LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN.—

1 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the head
3 of each agency shall establish a language access plan
4 to implement subsection (a) that—

5 (A) is practical and effective, readily imple-
6 mented, and responsive to the particular cir-
7 cumstances and mission of the agency;

8 (B) is consistent with the Language Access
9 Technical Standards issued under subsection
10 (c);

11 (C) is consistent with the standards set
12 forth—

13 (i) in the initial LEP Guidance of the
14 agency;

15 (ii) in the policy guidance document
16 entitled “Enforcement of Title VI of the
17 Civil Rights Act of 1964—National Origin
18 Discrimination Against Persons With Lim-
19 ited English Proficiency” 65 Fed. Reg. 50,
20 123 (Aug. 16, 2000); and

21 (iii) in the Attorney General’s memo-
22 randum to the heads of Department com-
23 ponents issued on November 21, 2022, en-
24 titled “Strengthening the Federal Govern-
25 ment’s Commitment to Language Access”;

1 (D) identifies which populations containing
2 individuals with LEP are likely to seek access
3 to the services and programs of the agency, in-
4 cluding language populations that are emerging,
5 have been historically isolated, are of lesser dif-
6 fusion, and do not have a commonly used writ-
7 ten format;

8 (E) describes how multilingual communica-
9 tions will be meaningfully provided to the popu-
10 lations identified pursuant under subparagraph
11 (D), including whether such communications
12 will be provided through oral, visual, or commu-
13 nity-based modes of communication as appro-
14 priate;

15 (F) in the case that the agency provides
16 assistance during emergency response situations
17 (such as disasters, public health crises, and
18 other urgent circumstances) specifies how mul-
19 tilingual communications will be meaningfully
20 provided to such populations during such situa-
21 tions regardless of whether an official state of
22 emergency has been declared; and

23 (G) sets procedures for the agency with re-
24 spect to monitoring, evaluating, and improving

1 the performance of the agency in implementing
2 the plan, including—

3 (i) regular assessments of the lan-
4 guage access needs of the agency and the
5 effectiveness of the language access pro-
6 vided by the agency;

7 (ii) measurable performance indicators
8 addressing timeliness, accuracy, and qual-
9 ity of language assistance services;

10 (iii) mechanisms for collecting and re-
11 viewing data on service usage, complaints,
12 and identified barriers;

13 (iv) periodic internal reviews con-
14 ducted by the civil rights office of the
15 agency; and

16 (v) processes for corrective action and
17 continuous improvement when deficiencies
18 or gaps in meaningful access are identified.

19 (2) NOTICE AND COMMENT.—The head of each
20 agency shall publish a proposal for the plan required
21 to be established under paragraph (1) in the Federal
22 Register for a 60-day public comment period to en-
23 sure that stakeholders, including individuals with
24 LEP and organizations representing such individ-
25 uals, have an adequate opportunity to provide input

1 on how the head of such agency carries out the pro-
2 visions of this Act.

3 (3) FEDERAL REGISTER.—After considering
4 any comments received during the period described
5 under paragraph (2) with respect to plan published
6 under such paragraph, the head of an agency
7 shall—

8 (A) update such plan on the basis of such
9 comments as the head of the agency determines
10 appropriate; and

11 (B) publish a finalized version of the plan
12 in the Federal Register.

13 (4) SUBMISSION TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
14 AND TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 30 days after
15 the head of an agency establishes the language ac-
16 cess plan required by paragraph (1), the head of
17 such agency shall submit such plan to—

18 (A) the Attorney General; and

19 (B) the Chair and Ranking Minority Mem-
20 ber of—

21 (i) the Committee on the Judiciary of
22 the House of Representatives;

23 (ii) the Committee on the Judiciary of
24 the Senate;

1 (iii) the Committee on Oversight and
2 Government Reform of the House of Rep-
3 resentatives; and

4 (iv) the Committee on Homeland Se-
5 curity and Governmental Affairs of the
6 Senate.

7 (5) CENTRAL REPOSITORY.—The Department
8 of Justice shall establish and maintain a publicly
9 available website with the domain name “LEP.gov”
10 to serve as the central repository for each plan sub-
11 mitted to the Attorney General under paragraph
12 (4)(A).

13 (c) LANGUAGE ACCESS TECHNICAL STANDARDS.—

14 (1) ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARD.—Not later
15 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this
16 Act, the head of each agency, in consultation with
17 the Attorney General, the National Institute of
18 Standards and Technology, and stakeholders and
19 advocates from non-English-speaking communities,
20 shall establish standards to be known as Language
21 Access Technical Standards to—

22 (A) ensure meaningful access to federally
23 conducted programs and activities under sub-
24 section (a); and

1 (B) be used as a measure of progress to
2 evaluate the effectiveness and accuracy of lan-
3 guage access for federally conducted programs
4 and activities carried out by each agency.

5 (2) GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY REQUIRE-
6 MENTS.—The Language Access Technical Standards
7 shall at a minimum, with respect to the systems and
8 services of the agency—

9 (A) allow individuals with LEP to access
10 any written content provided by the agency in
11 the language of their choice among the agency’s
12 supported languages;

13 (B) ensure the functionality, quality, and
14 timeliness of the system and services for all lan-
15 guages;

16 (C) implement user-friendly interfaces that
17 account for varying literacy and digital skills;
18 and

19 (D) be culturally determined.

20 (3) UNDUE BURDEN EXCEPTION.—

21 (A) WRITTEN REQUEST.—In the case that
22 the head of an agency determines that compli-
23 ance with a specific requirement included in the
24 Language Access Technical Standards estab-
25 lished under this subsection would impose an

1 undue burden on the agency, the head of the
2 agency shall submit to the Attorney General a
3 written request to waive such requirement for
4 the agency that identifies—

5 (i) the specific requirement that would
6 impose such undue burden;

7 (ii) the nature of the burden; and

8 (iii) any alternative to fulfilling the re-
9 quirement and why each such alternative is
10 not feasible.

11 (B) ATTORNEY GENERAL REVIEW.—

12 (i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30
13 days after receiving a request under sub-
14 paragraph (A), the Attorney General shall
15 grant or deny the request.

16 (ii) DETERMINATION CRITERIA.—In
17 determining whether to grant or deny a re-
18 quest under paragraph (2), the Attorney
19 General an agency shall consider wheth-
20 er—

21 (I) individuals with limited
22 English proficiency are likely to inter-
23 act with the agency; and

24 (II) a failure to provide meaning-
25 ful language access is likely to result

1 in significant harm, denial of benefits,
2 or diminished civil rights protections.

3 (C) EXPIRATION.—A grant of a waiver
4 under this subsection shall expire two years
5 after such grant.

6 (D) RECORD.—The Attorney General shall
7 maintain a publicly accessible record of all writ-
8 ten requests received under subparagraph (A)
9 in the central repository established under sub-
10 section (b)(5).

11 (4) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND COMMENT.—
12 Before establishing Language Access Technical
13 Standards, or updating any such standards, the
14 head of an agency shall provide opportunity for pub-
15 lic comment and engage communities representing
16 individuals with LEP, including community and cul-
17 tural organizations that work with individuals with
18 LEP, and providers of professional language serv-
19 ices.

20 (5) UPDATES.—The Language Access Tech-
21 nical Standards shall be reviewed at least once every
22 3 years, and updated as necessary following such re-
23 view.

1 (6) ADOPTION.—The head of each agency shall
2 certify compliance with the Language Access Tech-
3 nical Standards annually to the Attorney General.

4 (7) SCOPE.—The Language Access Technical
5 Standards shall apply to all agency programs, activi-
6 ties, and communications, including—

7 (A) in-person, telephonic, and virtual inter-
8 actions;

9 (B) paper and digital content and docu-
10 ments;

11 (C) websites, portals, and mobile applica-
12 tions; and

13 (D) artificial intelligence-assisted and ma-
14 chine translation language assistance services,
15 including automated translation, transcription,
16 and interpretation technologies.

17 (d) AI AND AUTOMATED LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE
18 SERVICES.—

19 (1) LIMITATION.—The head of an agency—

20 (A) may not fully replace any qualified lan-
21 guage assistance services of the agency with ar-
22 tificial intelligence or machine translation serv-
23 ices; and

1 (B) shall require a qualified human trans-
2 lator or interpreter to verify any use of such
3 service or machine translation by the agency.

4 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The head of each agency
5 shall ensure that any artificial intelligence-assisted
6 language assistance services used by the agency—

7 (A) do not replace any qualified translators
8 and interpreters;

9 (B) publicly disclose on an annual basis on
10 www.LEP.gov data sources, limitations, con-
11 fidence levels, and error rates of the service;

12 (C) comply with section 552a of title 5,
13 United States Code (commonly referred to as
14 the Privacy Act of 1974), the Federal Informa-
15 tion Security Modernization Act of 2014, and
16 the E–Government Act of 2002, and protect
17 personal and sensitive information from disclo-
18 sure;

19 (D) are tested to prevent discrimination
20 based on language, culture, ethnicity, or other
21 protected characteristics, with mitigation strate-
22 gies documented;

23 (E) are reviewed and validated by qualified
24 translators and interpreters to ensure proper

1 cultural context, idiomatic accuracy, and clarity
2 of the translation or interpretation; and

3 (F) are continuously monitored by the
4 agency for performance, with errors reported
5 and corrective actions for user-reported inac-
6 curacies in translation and interpretation imple-
7 mented.

8 (3) BEST PRACTICES.—Not later than 1 year
9 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the At-
10 torney General shall issue guidance on best practices
11 for the use of artificial intelligence in language as-
12 sistance services, including validation, monitoring,
13 and accountability measures for such artificial intel-
14 ligence.

15 (4) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

16 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General
17 of each agency shall conduct, at least once
18 every two years after the date of the enactment
19 of this Act, an audit of all artificial intelligence-
20 assisted language systems to assess accuracy,
21 fairness, cultural relevance, and compliance
22 with the Language Access Technical Standards
23 established under subsection (c).

24 (B) REPORT.—An Inspector General shall
25 submit to the Attorney General a report on an

1 audit conducted under subparagraph (A), not
2 later than 90 days after such audit is com-
3 pleted.

4 (C) PUBLIC TRANSPARENCY.—The Attor-
5 ney General shall make publicly available a
6 summary of the report submitted under sub-
7 paragraph (B).

8 (5) NIST.—The National Institute of Stand-
9 ards and Technology shall provide technical exper-
10 tise, validation protocols, and standardization tools
11 for artificial intelligence-assisted language assistance
12 services.

13 (e) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—

14 (1) INTERAGENCY LANGUAGE ACCESS STAND-
15 ARD COUNCIL.—The Administrator of General Serv-
16 ices shall convene an Interagency Language Access
17 Standards Council to coordinate updates, best prac-
18 tices, and research on emerging technologies.

19 (2) LANGUAGE ACCESS WORKING GROUP.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—There is established an
21 Language Access Working Group to—

22 (i) serve as a central resource for pro-
23 viding support and technical assistance to
24 agencies in implementing the language ac-
25 cess plan of the agency; and

1 (ii) directly engage with community
2 groups, individuals with LEP, and other
3 stakeholders to ensure adherence with this
4 Act.

5 (B) MEMBERSHIP.—The members of the
6 Group shall be comprised of one Language Ac-
7 cess Coordinator from each agency and the At-
8 torney General.

9 (C) HEAD OF GROUP.—The Attorney Gen-
10 eral shall serve as the head of the Group.

11 (f) ESTABLISHMENT OF LANGUAGE ACCESS COORDI-
12 NATOR POSITION.—

13 (1) POSITION.—There is established in each
14 agency a position to be known as the Language Ac-
15 cess Coordinator.

16 (2) DESIGNATION.—The head of each agency
17 shall designate an officer or employee of the agency
18 to serve as the Language Access Coordinator for the
19 agency.

20 (3) DUTIES.—The Language Access Coordi-
21 nator shall—

22 (A) serve as point of contact for each lan-
23 guage access effort of the agency;

24 (B) shall ensure that each agency compo-
25 nent that frequently interacts with individuals

1 with LEP provides, if feasible, mandatory an-
2 nual training to managers, personnel who fre-
3 quently communicate with individuals with
4 LEP, and personnel who arrange for language
5 support, on this Act, the language access plan
6 of the agency, and agency procedures for identi-
7 fying language access needs, providing language
8 assistance services, working with interpreters
9 and translators, requesting document trans-
10 lations, and tracking the use of language access
11 services;

12 (C) determine annually whether additional
13 federally conducted programs and activities
14 should be made accessible for individuals with
15 LEP and notify agency components of their re-
16 sponsibility to provide such access; and

17 (D) beginning on the date that is 3 years
18 after the date of the enactment of this Act,
19 evaluate the language access plan of the agency,
20 including a review of the costs of language as-
21 sistance services, and propose changes to agen-
22 cy components, as appropriate, to refine such
23 plan.

24 (g) NONCOMPLIANCE.—Noncompliance with the re-
25 quirements of this Act—

1 (1) shall be treated as discrimination under title
2 VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d
3 et seq.), thereby granting the Department of Justice
4 enforcement authority, including the authority to
5 conduct an investigation, commence an administra-
6 tive action, and seek civil remedies; and

7 (2) may trigger administrative, civil, or injunc-
8 tive remedies by aggrieved parties or the Attorney
9 General.

10 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

11 (1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the
12 meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5,
13 United States Code.

14 (2) INDIVIDUAL WITH LEP.—The term “indi-
15 vidual with LEP” means an individual for whom
16 English is not a primary language and who has a
17 limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand
18 the English language (including an individual who is
19 able to speak or understand the English language,
20 but has a limited ability to read or write the English
21 language).

22 (3) LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES.—The
23 term “language assistance services” means oral and
24 written language assistance services used to provide
25 individuals with LEP meaningful access to, and an

1 equal opportunity to participate fully in, the services,
2 activities, and other programs administered by the
3 Federal Government.

4 (4) MEANINGFUL ACCESS.—The term “mean-
5 ingful access” means access that—

6 (A) results in accurate, timely, and effec-
7 tive communication at no cost to the individual
8 with LEP; and

9 (B) is comparable to the access provided to
10 individuals who are proficient in English.

11 (5) PRIMARY LANGUAGE.—The term “primary
12 language” means the language in which an indi-
13 vidual most effectively communicates.

14 (6) PROGRAM OR ACTIVITY.—The term “pro-
15 gram or activity” means all the operations of an
16 agency that involve contact with the public, the ad-
17 ministration of Federal benefits, or communication
18 with members of the public or program participants.

19 (7) QUALIFIED INTERPRETER OR TRANS-
20 LATOR.—The term “qualified interpreter or trans-
21 lator” means—

22 (A) an individual who—

23 (i) is capable of effective, accurate,
24 and impartial rendition of spoken or signed
25 communication from one language to an-

1 other between people who speak, sign,
2 read, or write in a different language, both
3 receptively and expressively, using any nec-
4 essary specialized vocabulary and with ap-
5 propriate cultural relevance, either simulta-
6 neously or consecutively;

7 (ii) demonstrates to the Language Ac-
8 cess Coordinator of the agency proficiency
9 in and ability to listen to a spoken lan-
10 guage, seeing or feeling a signed or manual
11 language, or reading something written in
12 one language and expressing what is being
13 conveyed by that language accurately and
14 with appropriate cultural relevance into an-
15 other language, either simultaneously or
16 consecutively, including with respect to any
17 specialized term, concept, or any particu-
18 larized vocabulary or phraseology par-
19 ticular to the program or service concerned
20 that is being conveyed; and

21 (iii) understands and adheres to the
22 roles of interpreters or translators, includ-
23 ing any confidentiality, ethics, and impar-
24 tiality rules.

1 (8) VITAL DOCUMENT.—The term “vital docu-
2 ment” means any written material containing infor-
3 mation critical for—

4 (A) accessing or understanding a Federal
5 program or activity or required by law; or

6 (B) obtaining any aid, benefit, service, or
7 training, such as—

8 (i) an application for a benefit or
9 service;

10 (ii) a consent or complaint form;

11 (iii) a notice of rights and responsibil-
12 ities; or

13 (iv) a letter or notice that requires a
14 response from a beneficiary, applicant,
15 participant, or employee.

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