

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 1116

H.P. 844

House of Representatives, February 22, 2001

An Act to Honor Maine's French Heritage.

Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative MICHAEL of Auburn.
Cosponsored by Representatives: MENDROS of Lewiston, TWOMEY of Biddeford, USHER of Westbrook, Senator: WOODCOCK of Franklin.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

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Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §224 is enacted to read:

§224. State languages

1. Official languages. English and French are the official languages of the State. They are designated as the languages of all public documents and records and of all public proceedings and executive sessions.

2. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

A. "Executive sessions" means meetings at which only members of the elected or appointed public body and their legal counsel, authorized staff and invited witnesses may be present.

B. "Official languages" means the prescribed languages of all public documents, records and proceedings.

C. "Public documents and records" means all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the State and specifically includes all ballots used in statewide or local elections.

D. "Public proceedings" has the same meaning as in section 402, subsection 2 and includes the information recorded at those proceedings.

3. Exemptions. The provisions of this section do not apply:

A. To instruction in foreign language courses or other requirements of the University of Maine System, the State's public schools or any private school or college;

B. To instruction designed to aid students with limited English to integrate into the general education system;

C. To the promotion of international commerce, tourism and sporting events;

D. When the provisions interfere with the needs of the justice system;

E. When the public health, public safety or emergency services require the use of other languages, including, but not limited to, highway signs and other public signs; and

2 F. When expert testimony or witnesses require a language
4 other than English or French, except that, for purposes of
6 deliberation, decision making or record keeping, the
 official version of that testimony or commentary must be the
 official English and French translations.

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SUMMARY

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12 This bill establishes English and French as the official
 state languages.