

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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121st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2003

Legislative Document

No. 1126

H.P. 829

House of Representatives, March 4, 2003

An Act to Ensure Consistency in the Records and Documents of State and Local Government

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

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative HEIDRICH of Oxford.
Cosponsored by Senator BLAIS of Kennebec and
Representatives: BERUBE of Lisbon, COLLINS of Wells, DUPREY of Hampden, JOY of
Crystal, McKENNEY of Cumberland, SHIELDS of Auburn.

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

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

6 **§224. Designated language for documents and records**

8 **1. Designated language.** English is designated as the language of all public documents and records and of all public proceedings and executive sessions.

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

12 **A. "Executive session"** means a meeting at which only members of an elected or appointed public body and their legal counsel, authorized staff and invited witnesses may be present.

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

16 **C. "Public proceedings"** has the same meaning as in section 402, subsection 2 and includes the information recorded at such proceedings.

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

20 **A. To public proceedings between the State of Maine and Canada when, in the opinion of the state department head or representative involved in such proceedings, it is necessary to conduct those proceedings wholly or partially in French and to use public documents and records that are written wholly or partially in French during the proceedings;**

22 **B. To instruction in foreign language courses or other requirements of the University of Maine System and the State's public schools;**

24 **C. To instruction designed to aid students with limited English integrating into the general education system;**

26 **D. To the promotion of international commerce, tourism and sporting events;**

28 **E. When the provisions interfere with the needs of the justice system;**

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

5
6 G. When expert testimony or witnesses require a language
7 other than English, except that, for purposes of
8 deliberation, decision making or record keeping, the
9 official version of such testimony or commentary must be in
10 English.

11
12 **SUMMARY**

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14 The purpose of this bill is to ensure consistency in the
15 records and documents of state and local government. This bill
16 designates English as the language of public records and
documents, unless specifically exempted.