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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**H. R.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. MENG introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee  
on \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**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  
5           programs and activities of the agency, including  
6           by—

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

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

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

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

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

1 (B) providing oral interpretation, sight  
2 translation, and telephonic or remote interpre-  
3 tation services to such individuals;

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

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

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

23 (F) training employees of the agency who  
24 interact with the public on any policy or proce-  
25 dure established by the agency to implement

1 the language access plan in established by the  
2 agency under subsection (b).

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

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

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

16 (C) REPORTS.—The Attorney General  
17 shall publish on the website of the Department  
18 of Justice an annual report summarizing the  
19 complaints made under subparagraph (A),  
20 disaggregated by the agency that is the subject  
21 of the complaint, the language with respect to  
22 which the agency failed to provide access, and  
23 the program or activity to which the person is  
24 guaranteed meaningful access under paragraph  
25 (1).

1 (b) LANGUAGE ACCESS PLAN.—

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

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

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

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

14 (i) the initial LEP Guidance of the  
15 agency;

16 (ii) the policy guidance document enti-  
17 tled “Enforcement of Title VI of the Civil  
18 Rights Act of 1964—National Origin Dis-  
19 crimination Against Persons With Limited  
20 English Proficiency” 65 Fed. Reg. 50, 123  
21 (Aug. 16, 2000); and

22 (iii) the Attorney General’s memo-  
23 randum to the heads of Department com-  
24 ponents issued on November 21, 2022 en-

1                   titled “Strengthening the Federal Govern-  
2                   ment’s Commitment to Language Access”;

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

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

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

1 (G) sets procedures for the agency with re-  
2 spect to monitoring, evaluating, and improving  
3 the performance of agency in implementing the  
4 plan, including—

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

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

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

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

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

21 (2) NOTICE AND COMMENT.—The head of each  
22 agency shall publish a proposal for the plan required  
23 to be established under paragraph (1) in the Federal  
24 Register for a 60-day public comment period to en-  
25 sure that stakeholders, including individuals with

1 LEP and organizations representing such individ-  
2 uals, have an adequate opportunity to provide input  
3 on how the head of such agency carries out the pro-  
4 visions of this Act.

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

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

13 (B) publish a finalized version of the plan  
14 in the Federal Register.

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

20 (A) the Attorney General; and

21 (B) the Chair and Ranking Minority Mem-  
22 ber of—

23 (i) the Committee on the Judiciary of  
24 the House of Representatives;



1 (ii) the Committee on the Judiciary of  
2 the Senate;

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

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

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

15 (c) LANGUAGE ACCESS TECHNICAL STANDARDS.—

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

1 (A) ensure meaningful access to Federally-  
2 conducted programs and activities under sub-  
3 section (a); and

4 (B) be used as a measure of progress to  
5 evaluate the effectiveness and accuracy of lan-  
6 guage access for Federally-conducted programs  
7 and activities carried out by each agency.

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

12 (A) allow individuals with LEP to access  
13 any written content provided by the agency in  
14 the language of their choice among the agency's  
15 supported languages;

16 (B) ensure the functionality, quality, and  
17 timeliness of the system and services for all lan-  
18 guages;

19 (C) implement user-friendly interfaces that  
20 account for varying literacy and digital skills;  
21 and

22 (D) be culturally determined.

23 (3) UNDUE BURDEN EXCEPTION.—

24 (A) WRITTEN REQUEST.—In the case that  
25 the head of an agency determines that compli-

1           ance with a specific requirement included in the  
2           Language Access Technical Standards estab-  
3           lished under this subsection would impose an  
4           undue burden on the agency, the head of the  
5           agency shall submit to the Attorney General a  
6           written request to waive such requirement for  
7           the agency that identifies—

8                   (i) the specific requirement that would  
9                   impose such undue burden;

10                   (ii) the nature of the burden; and

11                   (iii) any alternative to fulfilling the re-  
12                   quirement and why each such alternative is  
13                   not feasible.

14           (B) ATTORNEY GENERAL REVIEW.—

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

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

1 (I) individuals with limited  
2 English proficiency are likely to inter-  
3 act with the agency; and

4 (II) a failure to provide meaning-  
5 ful language access is likely to result  
6 in significant harm, denial of benefits,  
7 or diminished civil rights protections.

8 (C) EXPIRATION.— A grant of a waiver  
9 under this subsection shall expire two years  
10 after such grant.

11 (D) RECORD.—The Attorney General shall  
12 maintain a publicly accessible record of all writ-  
13 ten requests received under subparagraph (A)  
14 in the central repository established under sub-  
15 section (b)(5).

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

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

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

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

11 (A) in-person, telephonic, and virtual inter-  
12 actions;

13 (B) paper and digital content and docu-  
14 ments;

15 (C) websites, portals, and mobile applica-  
16 tions; and

17 (D) artificial intelligence-assisted and ma-  
18 chine translation language assistance services,  
19 including automated translation, transcription,  
20 and interpretation technologies.

21 (d) AI AND AUTOMATED LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE  
22 SERVICES.—

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

24 (A) may not fully replace any qualified lan-  
25 guage assistance services of the agency with ar-

1           tificial intelligence or machine translation serv-  
2           ices; and

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

6           (2) REQUIREMENTS.—The head of each agency  
7           shall ensure that any artificial intelligence-assisted  
8           language assistance services used the by the agen-  
9           cy—

10           (A) do not replace any qualified translators  
11           and interpreters;

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

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

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

1 (E) are reviewed and validated by qualified  
2 translators and interpreters to ensure proper  
3 cultural context, idiomatic accuracy, and clarity  
4 of the translation or interpretation; and

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

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

17 (4) AUDIT REQUIREMENT.—

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

1 (B) REPORT.—An Inspector General shall  
2 submit to the Attorney General a report on an  
3 audit conducted under subparagraph (A), not  
4 later than 90 days after such audit is com-  
5 pleted.

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

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

15 (e) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—

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

21 (2) LANGUAGE ACCESS WORKING GROUP.—

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

24 (i) serve as a central resource for pro-  
25 viding support and technical assistance to



1 agencies in implementing the language ac-  
2 cess plan of the agency; and

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

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

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

13 (f) ESTABLISHMENT OF LANGUAGE ACCESS COORDI-  
14 NATOR POSITION.—

15 (1) POSITION.—There is established in agency  
16 a position to be known as the Language Access Co-  
17 ordinator.

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

22 (3) DUTIES.—The Language Access Coordi-  
23 nator shall—

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

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

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

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

1 (g) NONCOMPLIANCE.—Noncompliance with the re-  
2 quirements of this Act—

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

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

12 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

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

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

24 (3) LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE SERVICES.—The  
25 term “language assistance services” means oral and

1 written language assistance services used to provide  
2 individuals with LEP meaningful access to, and an  
3 equal opportunity to participate fully in, the services,  
4 activities, and other programs administered by the  
5 Federal Government.

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

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

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

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

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

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

24 (A) an individual who—

1 (i) capable of effective, accurate, and  
2 impartial rendition of spoken or signed  
3 communication from one language to an-  
4 other between people who speak, sign,  
5 read, or write in a different language, both  
6 receptively and expressively, using any nec-  
7 essary specialized vocabulary and with ap-  
8 propriate cultural relevance, either simulta-  
9 neously or consecutively;

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

24 (iii) understands and adheres to the  
25 roles of interpreters or translators, includ-

1                   ing any confidentiality, ethics, and impar-  
2                   tiality rules.

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

6                   (A) accessing or understanding a Federal  
7                   program or activity or required by law; or

8                   (B) obtaining any aid, benefit, service, or  
9                   training, such as—

10                   (i) an application for a benefit or  
11                   service;

12                   (ii) a consent or complaint form;

13                   (iii) a notice of rights and responsibil-  
14                   ities; or

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