

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE BILL NO. 424

BY REPRESENTATIVES MONTOUCET, BOBBY BADON, BALDONE, BARRAS, BISHOP, BROSSETT, CHAMPAGNE, CONNICK, CORTEZ, DIXON, DOERGE, DOVE, EDWARDS, ELLINGTON, GISCLAIR, GUILLORY, GUINN, HARDY, HARRISON, HENRY, HUVAL, SAM JONES, LANDRY, LEBAS, LEGER, LOPINTO, PONTI, RITCHIE, ROBIDEAUX, ST. GERMAIN, TEMPLET, AND TUCKER

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 14 of Title 25 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be comprised
3 of R.S. 25:671 through 674, to provide for the Louisiana French Language Services
4 Program; to provide for identification of employees in state departments who can
5 provide services in French or assist employees in providing services to French-
6 speaking persons; to provide for development and implementation of the program
7 by the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism in concert with the Council
8 for the Development of French in Louisiana; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. Chapter 14 of Title 25 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,
11 comprised of R.S. 25:671 through 674, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

12 CHAPTER 14. LOUISIANA FRENCH LANGUAGE SERVICES PROGRAM

13 §671. Legislative findings

14 The legislature finds that:

15 (1) The heritage of the French-speaking people of Louisiana is one of the
16 greatest treasures of Louisiana's rich cultural patrimony and perhaps the most
17 significant factor in making the state's culture unique.

18 (2) Louisiana has a quarter of a million French-speaking citizens and a
19 million residents of French-language heritage, and French-speaking visitors to
20 Louisiana spend roughly one hundred million dollars annually in the state.

1 (3) Commercial and industrial concerns based in France have made
2 investments of one billion eight hundred million dollars in the state and further
3 encouragement of such investment is in the interests of the state.

4 (4) Providing state government services in the French language would
5 encourage the preservation of the state's French cultural heritage for future
6 generations, would provide important and sometimes life-sustaining services to
7 French-speaking citizens and visitors, and would support and encourage French
8 investment in Louisiana, and therefore, would serve not only the state's French-
9 speaking citizens but the entire state.

10 §672. Louisiana French Language Services Program; purposes

11 The Louisiana French Language Services Program shall be established as
12 provided in this Chapter for the following purposes:

13 (1) To the extent practicable, to provide state government services to French-
14 speaking citizens and visitors in the French language.

15 (2) To assist Louisiana citizens who speak French in dealing with and
16 receiving services from state government so as to support the long-term
17 sustainability of Louisiana's historic French cultural heritage.

18 (3) To assist French-speaking visitors to the state and thus to promote an
19 increase in tourism and greater investment in the state from Francophone countries.

20 §673. Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism; program responsibilities;
21 cooperation of departments

22 A. The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, referred to in this
23 Chapter as the "department", in concert with and under the guidance of the Council
24 for the Development of French in Louisiana, shall develop and provide for
25 implementation of a program for provision of services of state government in the
26 French language.

27 B.(1)(a) In developing the program, the department shall work in
28 cooperation with departments of state government, and such departments shall
29 cooperate with the department.

1 **(b) The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism shall also participate**
2 **in the program in the same manner as other departments.**

3 **(2) The department shall request each state department to identify its**
4 **employees who speak French with sufficient fluency to provide or assist others in**
5 **providing services of the department to French-speaking persons and shall assist the**
6 **departments in identifying such employees. The department shall request the**
7 **Council for the Development of French in Louisiana to assist the departments of**
8 **state government in identifying employees who speak French with necessary**
9 **fluency.**

10 **(3) The department shall develop guidelines for implementation of the**
11 **program. Such guidelines shall address such issues as priorities in implementing the**
12 **program in service areas with greater numbers of French-speaking citizens or visitors**
13 **and for services dealing with such matters as health, safety, compliance with**
14 **regulations, or complexity of processes. The implementation guidelines shall also**
15 **address dealing with limited department resources.**

16 **(4) The department shall provide for appropriate insignia, such as a badge**
17 **with the word "Bienvenue" or "Bonjour" to identify employees who will assist**
18 **French-speaking clients in accessing and using department services. The department**
19 **shall provide procedures for recognition of the employees entitled to wear such**
20 **insignia which may include recognition of the employee's language skills by the**
21 **Council for the Development of French in Louisiana.**

22 **C.(1) The department shall provide for implementation of the program by**
23 **state departments in accordance with the guidelines developed as provided in this**
24 **Section and subject to the resources available to individual departments.**

25 **(2) The department shall urge the convention and visitors bureaus throughout**
26 **the state to implement a similar program.**

1 §674. Recommendations; award of excellence

2 A. The Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism shall make
3 recommendations for improving the provision of French language services to state
4 departments, the governor, and the legislature.

5 B. The department may institute an annual "Sceau d'excellence" [Seal of
6 excellence] designation for the state department, agency, or office that best
7 accomplishes the program's purposes, giving consideration to public visibility and
8 recognition for the program within the department, agency, or office and the
9 proportion of employees who are participating.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: _____