AN INITIATIVE ADOPTING ENGLISH AS THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF ALASKA

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose

The people of the State of Alaska find that English is the common unifying language of the State of Alaska and the United States of America, and declare a compelling interest in promoting, preserving and strengthening its use.

Section 2. Official Language

The English language is the official language of the State of Alaska.

Section 3. Scope

The English language is the language to be used by all public agencies in all government functions and actions. The English language shall be used in the preparation of all official public documents and records, including all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the government.

Section 4. Applicability

This Act applies to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of the State of Alaska and all political subdivisions, including all departments, agencies, divisions and instrumentalities of the State, the University of Alaska, all public authorities and corporations, all local governments and departments, agencies, divisions, and instrumentalities of local governments, and all government officers and employees.

Section 5. Exceptions

(a) The government, as defined in Section 4 of this Act, may use a language other than English when necessary for the following purposes:

(1) to communicate health and safety information or when an emergency requires the use of a language other than English,

(2) to teach another language to students proficient in English,

(3) to teach English to students of limited English proficiency,

(4) to promote international relations, trade, commerce, tourism or sporting events,

(5) to protect the constitutional and legal rights of criminal defendants,

(6) to serve the needs of the judicial system in civil and criminal cases,

(7) to investigate criminal activity and protect the rights of crime victims,

(8) to the extent necessary to comply with federal law, including the Native American Languages Act,

(9) to attend or observe religious ceremonies,

(10) to use non-English terms of art, names, phrases, or expressions included as part of communications otherwise in English, and

(11) to communicate orally with constituents by elected public officials and their staffs, if the public official or staff member is already proficient in a language other than English.

(b) An individual may provide testimony or make a statement to the government in a language other than English, if the individual is not an officer or employee of the government, and if the testimony or statement is translated into English and included in the records of the government.

Section 6. Public Accountability

All costs related to the preparation, translation, printing, or recording of documents, records, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, or other material in languages other than English shall be defined as a separate line item in the budget of every governmental agency, department, or office.

Section 7. Non-Denial of Employment or Services

(a) No governmental entity shall require knowledge of a language other than English as a condition of employment unless the requirements of the position fall within one of the exceptions provided in Section 5 of this Act, and facility in another language is a bona fide job qualification required to fulfill a function included within one of the exceptions.

(b) No person may be denied services, assistance, benefits, or facilities, directly or indirectly provided by the government, because that person communicates only in English.

Section 8. Private Sector Excluded

This Act shall not be construed in any way that infringes upon the rights of persons to use

languages other than English in activities or functions conducted solely in the private sector, and the government may not restrict the use of language other than English in such private activities or functions.

Section 9. Private Cause of Action Authorized

Any person may bring suit against any governmental entity to enforce the provisions of this Act.

Section 10. Severability

The provisions of this Act are independent and severable, and if any provision of this Act, or the applicability of any provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected and shall be given effect to the fullest extent practicable.