
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 141 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY CRUZ, YOUNGBLOOD, BROWNLEE AND COHEN,
MARCH 12, 2013

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT, MARCH 12, 2013

A RESOLUTION

1 Encouraging the Congress of the United States to reform the
2 Immigration and Nationality Act by eliminating the English
3 test and allowing the administration of the civics test in
4 the native language of the applicant.

5 WHEREAS, The McCarran-Walter Act (P.L.82-414), otherwise
6 known as the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), was enacted
7 in 1952 by collecting and codifying many different statutes
8 governing immigration laws; and

9 WHEREAS, The INA establishes laws to regulate immigration and
10 nationality in the United States; and

11 WHEREAS, In order to become a naturalized United States
12 citizen, Act 312 of the INA requires individuals to prove an
13 understanding of the English language, including an ability to
14 read, write and speak words in ordinary usage in English; and

15 WHEREAS, Act 312 of the INA requires individuals to prove
16 knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history,
17 principles and form of government of the United States; and

18 WHEREAS, Applicants are exempt from proving an understanding
19 of the English language if the applicant is either 50 years of

1 age or older and has lived as a permanent United States resident
2 for 20 years or 55 years of age or older and has lived as a
3 permanent United States resident for 15 years; and

4 WHEREAS, Applicants are afforded the opportunity to prove
5 civic knowledge and understanding in their native language if an
6 exemption from proving an understanding of the English language
7 is granted; and

8 WHEREAS, The United States was founded, not on language
9 proficiency, but on the principles of fairness, equality and
10 opportunity; and

11 WHEREAS, In the 19th century, millions of individuals who
12 immigrated to the United States were naturalized without English
13 language proficiency; and

14 WHEREAS, Children and grandchildren of immigrants
15 overwhelmingly comprehend the English language, more so than
16 their parents' or grandparents' native language; and

17 WHEREAS, An English language requirement to naturalization,
18 based on unfounded fears and uncertainties, stands in direct
19 opposition to the tenets of the First Amendment of the
20 Constitution of the United States; and

21 WHEREAS, Many eligible individuals do not achieve United
22 States citizenship due to the English proficiency requirement to
23 naturalization; therefore be it

24 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the
25 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania encourage the Congress of the
26 United States to eliminate the English proficiency test and
27 allow the civics test to be administered in the native language
28 of all applicants; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to
30 the presiding officers of each house of Congress and to each

1 member of Congress from Pennsylvania.