

Government Administration and Elections Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5347 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT REQUIRING A PLAN FOR THE TRANSLATION AND REVIEW OF FORMS AND APPLICATIONS REQUIRED TO ACCESS STATE AGENCY

Title: SERVICES OR BENEFITS BY LIMITED-ENGLISH PROFICIENT INDIVIDUALS.

Vote Date: 3/11/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/4/2026

File No.: 195

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Government Administration and Elections Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

For individuals in the state to receive the services and benefits provided by the executive branch, they are required to complete electronic or paper applications or forms. Currently these forms and applications are available in English but are not always available in other commonly spoke languages. Proponents of the bill claim this creates a barrier for individuals with limited English proficiency to access these benefits and services. The bill would require the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to develop a plan by January 1, 2027, for reviewing and translating all printed or electronic forms required to access executive branch state agency services or benefits and would require state agencies to implement the plan and to appoint a liaison with DAS to ensure compliance. This bill would help promote inclusion in the government process and get more citizens engaged in the civic process.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Michelle Gilman, Commissioner, Department of Administrative Services

While supportive of the proposal's intent, DAS argues it is not well positioned to lead a comprehensive translation plan. Its role has been limited to supporting agencies, primarily through digital accessibility efforts. DAS currently provides statewide contracts for interpretation and translation services and offers machine translation for agency websites, with guidance to use manual translation for critical content. The DAS Procurement Services division has ensured the availability of three state-wide contracts for interpretation and translation services that client agencies may utilize. They are: 25PSX0234 for virtual / on-demand remote-interpretation services; 21PSX0065 for in-person translation and document

translation services; 19PSX0008 for interpreting services for deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing individuals. DAS-BITS provides translation into eight primary languages and agencies may request additional languages outside the eight and we work to accommodate their requests when possible. Individual agencies set their own translation needs. DAS suggests an alternative approach by considering a previously approved amendment from House Bill 6477 (2025) as a more appropriate path forward and expresses willingness to continue discussions with stakeholders.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jason Rojas, House Majority Leader, CT General Assembly

H.B. 5347 requires the Department of Administrative Services to develop a plan to translate all state agency forms and applications into the twelve most common non-English languages in Connecticut. This addresses the needs of a significant portion of residents—about 41% of foreign-born individuals—who have limited English proficiency and face barriers accessing services and participating fully in civic life. The bill aims to improve accessibility, inclusion, and engagement across diverse communities. It also briefly notes that H.B. 5346 and 5348 involve minor related changes.

Megan Baker, Lead AAPI Policy Analyst, CWCSEO

CWCSEO supports HB 5347 as a key step to improve access to state services for individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). Language barriers can limit access to resources, harm health outcomes, and increase social isolation, while often placing translation burdens on children in multilingual families. Expanding language access would promote inclusion, workforce participation, and civic engagement. As Connecticut becomes more diverse, with a growing range of languages spoken, the bill would ensure state materials are translated to meet evolving needs. The proposed plan and review process would help agencies adapt over time, strengthening families, communities, and the state's economy by making services more accessible.

Chavon Calitri, Parent, ConnCAN

Ms. Calitri, a Waterbury parent, strongly supports HB 5347, emphasizing that language access is essential for student success and family engagement. When families cannot understand important information, students face lower academic involvement, reduced access to supports, and widening achievement gaps. Without translated materials, parents struggle to navigate education systems and support their children effectively. The bill would ensure families receive information in languages they understand, enabling them to stay informed, advocate for their children, and access necessary resources. The testimony highlights that equitable access to information is critical for fair educational outcomes and meaningful participation in school systems.

Yvonne Cruz, Parent, ConnCAN

Ms. Cruz, a grandparent from Waterbury, supports HB 5347, stressing that language access is critical for student success and family involvement. When families cannot understand information, students face lower engagement, fewer supports, and widening achievement gaps. Without translated forms and materials, caregivers struggle to navigate the education system and support their children effectively. The bill would ensure families receive information in languages they understand, allowing them to stay informed, remain connected

to schools, and better support their children's education. The testimony highlights that accessible communication is essential for equitable educational outcomes and meaningful family participation.

Claudia Encinas, parent, ConnCAN

Ms. Encinas, shares her experience as an immigrant and educator, highlighting how language barriers make it difficult for families to access essential services and opportunities. She emphasizes that many parents want to support their children's education but struggle to understand forms and processes available only in English. This lack of access—not lack of interest—limits participation. The speaker argues that HB 5347, which promotes translation and review of state forms, would improve access to services like healthcare, education, and employment. They conclude that language access is essential for fairness, dignity, and opportunity, and urge support for the bill to create a more inclusive Connecticut.

Robert Goodrich, Executive Director, RACCE Inc.

Mr. Goodrich, supports HB 5347, emphasizing it as a practical and widely supported step toward a more equitable Connecticut. He explains that residents rely on state and local agencies for essential services such as health, education, housing, and workforce development. Without accessible materials, individuals with limited English proficiency face barriers to these critical resources. The bill would require agencies to plan and provide translated forms and outreach materials, making services more inclusive and effective. He argues this is a necessary measure to ensure all residents can fully access public services and opportunities.

Briana Heng

Ms. Heng, a small business owner, nursing student, and first-generation Cambodian American, describes personal experiences with language barriers affecting their family's access to education, healthcare, and government services. They explain how they often had to act as an interpreter growing up, a responsibility children should not bear. From a healthcare perspective, they highlight that language barriers can lead to dangerous misunderstandings and impact patient safety and quality of care. As a business owner, they emphasize the importance of language access for community participation and economic contribution. Overall, they argue that improving language access is essential for safety, equity, and full participation in society.

Mariabel Huarca, parent, ConnCAN

Ms. Huarca, an educator and family advocate, supports HB 5347 based on her experience working with immigrant families. She explains that language barriers prevent many families from accessing essential services like healthcare, housing, workforce programs, and education. Despite their strong commitment, parents often feel excluded because they cannot fully understand forms and processes. She emphasizes that language access is an issue of dignity, equity, and opportunity, directly affecting family stability and student success. Huarca argues that HB 5347 would help create a more inclusive Connecticut by ensuring families can fully participate in the systems that support their well-being and their children's education.

Sandy Lomonico

Ms. Lomonico supports HB 5347 by sharing her personal experience growing up in an immigrant family without access to information in her parents' language. Because of this, her academic struggles went unnoticed, leaving her behind in reading and affecting her

confidence and educational trajectory. She emphasizes that no child or family should miss critical opportunities in education, health, or safety due to language barriers. Despite later success helping others through her work in social work and public health, she stresses that these challenges were preventable. She urges support for the bill to ensure families can access essential information and create a more equitable education system.

Daira Marin, Youth Power Strategist-Make the Road CT

Ms. Daira, a Youth Power Strategist in Bridgeport, describes the challenges youth and families face, including financial hardship, fear of instability, and lack of school support. Budget cuts have led to fewer teachers and counselors, negatively impacting student support, mental health, and special education services. Many students struggle to attend school or succeed due to these gaps. The speaker argues that underfunding disproportionately harms low-income communities and calls for equitable school funding, expanded resources, and stronger support systems. They emphasize that investing in education and youth services is essential to improving outcomes and preventing long-term disadvantages for vulnerable students.

Steven Hernandez, Esq., Executive Director, ConnCAN

Mr. Hernandez feels this bill is presented as a practical step to improve access to state services for Connecticut's growing multilingual population. With multilingual learners increasing significantly, many families struggle to access services because key forms are only in English. The bill builds on prior efforts like the Multilingual Learner Bill of Rights by extending language access across all state agencies. It would improve equity, government efficiency, and economic participation by reducing errors, delays, and barriers to workforce opportunities. The proposal also aligns Connecticut with other states implementing similar language access policies and establishes a long-term framework to ensure services remain accessible as demographics evolve.

Luis Ortiz, Director of Community, ConnCAN

Luis Ortiz supports HB 5347, stating that language barriers prevent many residents from accessing services. He argues the bill would create a coordinated plan to translate documents, improving access, efficiency, and workforce participation while aligning Connecticut with other states.

Monica Palomino, parent, ConnCAN

Ms. Palomino, a mother describes how language barriers make it difficult for families to understand important government forms, causing fear, confusion, and missed opportunities for services like healthcare and housing. She emphasizes that immigrant parents want to support their children and participate fully but are limited when information is only in English. She supports HB 5347, explaining it would create a plan to translate and review state forms, helping families access resources and make informed decisions. She concludes that language access is about dignity, security, and opportunity, and is essential for families to thrive in Connecticut.

Elvin Torres Nieves, parent, ConnCAN

Ms. Torres Nieves, a parent, supports a plan of having translations available for public services to people in need of help. It's an incredible and extremely essential service to have because countless people live without the resources they deserve and desperately need simply because they cannot understand or verbalize what they need in the language

available. It is not equal or fair to have people live like that if the assistance they need can be provided to them.

Mario Volpe, Policy – Advocacy Manager, CCADV

CCADV supports HB 5347, emphasizing that language barriers make it harder for domestic violence survivors with limited English proficiency to access critical services. Survivors often must navigate housing, healthcare, and legal systems during crisis, and language gaps can delay safety, housing, employment, and schooling for their children. These barriers can worsen isolation and prolong abuse. The bill would create a statewide plan to translate essential forms into multiple languages, helping ensure survivors can access the resources they need for safety, stability, and independence.

Casey Wells

Ms. Wells, an MPH candidate at Yale, supports HB 5347 as a way to improve language access and ensure equitable access to state services. Drawing from work with a refugee family, Wells highlights that some communities rely heavily on services but may not be captured by top statewide language data. They recommend amending the bill to consider both Census data and program-level usage data when deciding which languages to translate. This approach would better reflect real service needs and help families independently navigate critical systems like healthcare and food assistance.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Anonymous 39

They oppose HB 5347 because they believe non English-speaking adults should learn to speak English and not create bureaucracy and extra expense for the people that live here legally.

Michele May

Ms. May opposes HB 5347, arguing it would create unnecessary costs by requiring translation plans, staff, and implementation across agencies. They express concern that taxpayer money would be used to support non-citizens and increase state spending. Instead, they advocate for prioritizing English as the primary language, limiting translations to legal residents, imposing cost controls, and promoting English learning programs. They urge rejection of the bill in favor of fiscal responsibility and policies that emphasize assimilation.

Reported by: Cindy Panioto

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