

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2341 (Fong)

As Amended June 23, 2026

2/3 vote. Urgency

SUMMARY

This bill revises the existing requirements for a local agency that provides emergency response services to translate information related to an emergency into non-English languages.

Senate Amendments

- 1) Authorizes a local agency to use data from *any equally reliable source*, in addition to the American Community Survey data, when determining whether a population meets criteria for language translation.
- 2) Declares a local agency is not prohibited from adopting more expansive standards than those set forth in this code section.
- 3) Makes other clarifying, nonsubstantive changes, as specified.

COMMENTS

AB 1638 (Fong): AB 1638 (Fong), Chapter 587, Statutes of 2023, requires local agencies, in the event of an emergency in the jurisdiction of the agency, to provide information related to the emergency in all languages spoken jointly by five percent or more of the population whenever those same people also speak English less than very well, as specified. This bill makes changes to clarify that local agencies must translate emergency information only for a particular language where the American Community Survey, or data from an equally reliable source, indicates that 5% of the individuals who speak that language speaks English "less than very well."

Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act: The Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (Act) became law in 1973 and later amended by AB 2253 (Ting), Chapter 469, Statutes of 2014. This Act ensures all Californians, including limited-English-proficient (LEP) people, can access public services regardless of language barriers. The Act mandates that state and local agencies must provide information in English and, if the agency serves a "substantial number" of non-English speakers, any other relevant languages based on their jurisdiction. Agencies must conduct surveys every other year to assess their contact with the LEP population and determine which languages they will publish. Additionally, the Act mandates that every state and local agency have bilingual staff and translated written materials so that they and the LEP population can effectively communicate. Furthermore, each agency must post how to submit complaints of alleged Act violations, in all relevant languages, on their website's homepage. Cal HR must issue orders deemed appropriate to implement the Act if a state agency has yet to make reasonable progress toward reaching compliance.

Recent Disasters with Large Populations of Non-English Speakers: In January 2023, a mass shooting occurred in Monterey Park, Los Angeles County, where the gunman killed eleven people and injured nine others. In that same month, a mass shooting occurred in Half Moon Bay, where seven people were killed and one person was critically injured. These communities are predominately Asian or Asian and Latino, respectively, and have a significant number of community members that speak languages other than English. In these instances, law

enforcement did not immediately apprehend the perpetrator. Law enforcement shared safety information with the public, but the author's office is concerned about whether these communities received adequate updates in their primary languages.

Later that year, in March 2023, a broken levee in Monterey County flooded the entire town of Pajaro and forced more than 2,000 people to evacuate. Pajaro is predominately a town of farmworkers where a large portion of the community only speaks Mixteco. Various news articles identify the failures of local agencies communicating with these individuals as well as the detrimental impacts on safety and access to recovery information.

According to the Author

"Following a mass shooting that took place in my District in 2023, I introduced a bill to require translation to be provided in certain languages during an emergency situation. Translation is required if 5% of the population who speaks another language at home speaks English "less than very well" according to the American Community Survey. AB 2341 makes a minor change to make it clear that local agencies must translate emergency information into any language spoken by at least 5% of that population that speaks English less than "very well."

Arguments in Support

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and Urban Counties of California (UCC) write in support, "While the law (AB 1638) was intended to require translation into the top language(s) spoken other than English, specifically at least five percent of a city or county, late amendments created confusion about which languages must be translated. One reading of the law could require that every single language included in the American Community Survey (ACS) is required to be translated, causing local agencies to translate dozens of languages during an emergency. This could cause significant problems, consuming vast public resources during a crisis and, more importantly, crowding out information for those who most need it. Many local agencies use phone notifications during an emergency, delivering information via text or phone calls directly. If a county uses text or phone call notices to residents, they may have to deliver that notice in well over thirty languages under a reading of the current law. This could create unnecessary confusion or fatigue, causing residents to miss crucial notification about the emergency. AB 2341 would fix this problem, ensuring that emergency translations are delivered into languages spoken by at least five percent of speakers with translation needs – defined as those that speak English less than "very well." The bill provides vital clarity for public agencies and ensures the law can meet its intended purpose: to deliver rapid emergency notices in languages most commonly spoken in a city or county."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

This bill is not keyed as fiscal.

VOTES:**ASM EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: 6-0-1****YES:** Ransom, Hadwick, Arambula, Bennett, Calderon, DeMaio**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Bains**ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0-3****YES:** Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Flora, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Arambula, Bennett, Celeste Rodriguez**SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1****YES:** Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener**ABS, ABST OR NV:** Alvarado-Gil**UPDATED**

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CONSULTANT: Ugbad Farah / E.M. / (916) 319-3802

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