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**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION**

**Senator Susan Rubio**

**Chair**

**2025 - 2026 Regular**

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**Bill No:** AB 2360 **Hearing Date:** 6/23/2026  
**Author:** Arambula  
**Version:** 5/18/2026 Amended  
**Urgency:** No **Fiscal:** Yes  
**Consultant:** Brian Duke

**SUBJECT:** State agencies: governmental linguistics

**DIGEST:** This bill requires state agencies to write all new public-facing documents in clear, plain language, as specified, and to establish internal oversight processes to ensure communications are easy for the public to understand, including people with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

**ANALYSIS:**

Existing law:

- 1) Requires each state department, commission, office, or other administrative agency of state government to write each document, as defined, that it produces in plain, straightforward language, avoiding technical terms as much as possible, and using a coherent and easily readable style.
- 2) Defines a “state agency document” to mean any contract, form, license, announcement, regulation, manual, memorandum, or any other written communication that is necessary to carry out the agency’s responsibilities under the law.

This bill:

- 1) Requires each state agency to write each document that it produces after January 1, 2027, either digitally or in print, in plain language, avoiding technical terms as much as possible, and using a coherent and easily readable style.
- 2) Provides that to implement this bill, a state agency may use standards created by the Office of Data and Innovation that identify how a state agency incorporates plain language principles and practices.

- 3) Requires the head of each state agency, within existing personnel and resources, to do all of the following:
  - a) Designate one or more senior officials within the state agency to oversee state agency implementation of this bill.
  - b) Communicate the requirements of this bill to the employees of the state agency.
  - c) Establish a process for overseeing the ongoing compliance of the state agency with the requirements of this bill.
- 4) Defines “plain language” to mean language that is clear and easily understood by the intended audience, avoids unnecessary legal or technical jargon, and uses words, sentences, and structures that facilitate comprehension and accessibility for common literacy levels, including individuals with disabilities or limited English proficiency.
- 5) Defines “state agency” to mean each department, commission, office, or other administrative agency of state government.
- 6) Defines “state agency document” to mean any publicly available instruction, form, license, communication, regulation, manual, memorandum, or any other written communication that is necessary to carry out the state agency’s responsibilities under the law.

## Background

*Author Statement.* According to the author’s office, “plain language ensures that everyone, including those with cognitive disabilities, limited literacy, or language barriers, can easily find, understand, and use information to meet their needs. If it’s not accessible, it’s not acceptable. AB 2360 improves access and equity by ensuring state communications are clear, consistent, and written in plain language, so all Californians can better understand the laws that affect their lives and participate more fully in government.”

*What problem does this bill solve?* According to [information provided by the author’s office](#), “[a]ll Californians deserve to understand the state laws written for them. AB 2360 will create greater accessibility and opportunity for more equitable participation in government by ensuring communications to the public are written in plain language.”

Language that is not plain can cause real harm for Californians trying to navigate state agencies and departments. Not understanding government documents is a

significant form of administrative burden, directly leading to fewer people benefiting from the support services created to help them. There are currently almost 4 million Californians missing out on critical services, including:

- a) 1,540,000 uninsured Californians who are eligible for one of California's public medical insurance plans, including Covered CA or Medi-Cal,
- b) 240,000 Californians eligible for social services through CalWORKS,
- c) 1,925,000 Californians for food assistance through CalFresh, and
- d) 168,000 Californians with severe disabilities not served by regional centers.

Research consistently shows that using plain language in government communication reduces inquiries, increases compliance, and lowers administrative costs. In Washington State, revising a Department of Revenue letter into plain language led to a 95% drop in hotline calls and generated an additional \$5 million in revenue. Similarly, simplifying a U.S. Veterans Benefits contact letter increased the response rate from 35% to 55%, saving an estimated \$8 million annually. Ensuring that state communications are clear and genuinely useful to the public is an essential step toward building a more efficient, accessible, and equitable government.

*Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act and Plain Language Access.* California law requires all state government departments and agencies to use plain and straightforward language in their written documents. This means avoiding technical terms when possible and ensuring that documents are coherent and easy to read. The law applies to various types of documents, including contracts, forms, licenses, announcements, regulations, manuals, and memos needed for the agency's duties.

The Office of Data and Innovation created California's statewide plain language equity standard. ODI offers an online course for state employees titled "Introduction to Plain Language for the Public Sector." This course provides a foundational overview of plain language and its role in effective government communication.

The Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (Act) was signed into law in 1973, to eliminate language barriers that preclude people of our state, who either because they do not speak or write English or because their primary language is other than English, from having equal access to public services. This Act mandates that State and local agencies directly involved in the furnishing of information or the rendering of services to the public must in specifically prescribed situations employ a sufficient number of qualified bilingual persons in public contact

positions to ensure the provision of information and services to the public in the language of the non-English speaking people.

The Act further mandates that every State and local agency that serves a substantial number of non-English speaking people, and provides materials in English explaining services, shall also provide the same type of materials in any non-English language spoken by a substantial number of the public served by the agency.

This bill requires state agencies to write all new public-facing documents in clear, plain language, as specified, beginning January 1, 2027, and to establish internal oversight processes to ensure communications are easy for the public to understand, including people with disabilities or limited English proficiency.

**Prior/Related Legislation**

AB 1242 (Nguyen, 2025) would have revised and expanded requirements under the state’s Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act and require the California Health and Human Services Agency to designate a Language Access Director. (Held in the Senate Appropriations Committee Suspense File)

AB 67 (Dymally, Chapter 259, Statutes of 2007) standardized and defined language in the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act, clarified the State Personnel Boards

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Appropriation: No Fiscal Com.: Yes Local: No

**SUPPORT:**

California State Council of Developmental Disabilities (Source)  
Autism Speaks  
California Respite Association  
Manos Home Care

**OPPOSITION:**

None received

**ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT:** In support of the bill, the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities writes, in part, “Californians deserve clear, accessible communication from their government. Yet many residents struggle to understand state forms, instructions, and program information. This lack of clarity

limits access to essential services, reduce public trust, and creates inequitable barriers – particularly for individuals with cognitive disabilities, limited literacy, or those who speak a language other than English. Currently, only 27% of Californians believe the state is run for the benefit of all people, underscoring the need for more transparent and accessible communication.

Further, “[d]espite existing statutory requirements for ‘plain, straightforward language,’ these standards are inconsistently applied. As a result, millions of eligible Californians are not receiving critical services. Administrative burdens – such as confusing language on forms – are a major factor. For example, nearly 4 million Californians are not accessing benefits they qualify for, including health coverage, food assistance, and disability services. In fact, 40% of individuals eligible for CalFresh but not enrolled cite paperwork as a barrier.”