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OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Office of Research
and Drafting

Legislative Budget
Office

S.B. 298
133rd General Assembly

Bill Analysis

Version: As Introduced

Primary Sponsor: Sen. Craig

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SUMMARY

- Requires the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to make the COVID-19 website and phone hotline accessible in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Somali, and Nepali.
- Allows ODH to enlist the help of language translation and interpretation services that are available through a county department of job and family services.
- Declares an emergency.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Translation of the COVID-19 website and phone hotline

The bill requires the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to make the COVID-19 website¹ and phone hotline accessible in the following languages:

- Spanish;
- Chinese;
- Arabic.

¹ A technical amendment is needed for this bill. The bill specifies that the COVID-19 website URL is <http://coronavirus.odh.gov>. But, the URL has been changed to <http://coronavirus.ohio.gov> (lasted visited April 27, 2020). It is worth noting that the website has a link that allows automated language translation through the following browsers: Safari, Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, and Microsoft Edge. The available translations are: Spanish, Somali, Nepali, and Chinese. "Browser Translation," <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/home/browser-translation-info> (last visited April 27, 2020).

- Somali;
- Nepali.

For the hotline, the bill requires that ODH provide operators who speak, or translation services for, the above languages.²

In providing translation services for the website and hotline, ODH may enlist the help of language translation and interpretation services that are available through any county department of job and family services.³

Translation services must be provided for as long as the website and hotline remain active.⁴

Emergency clause

The bill declares an emergency and therefore requires that the act goes into immediate effect upon its passage. The reason for the emergency is to make vital information regarding COVID-19 accessible to individuals who are not proficient in English during the state of emergency declared by Executive Order 2020-01D, issued on March 9, 2020.⁵

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	03-25-20

S0298-I-133/ts

² Section 1(A) and (B).

³ Section 1(C).

⁴ Section 1(D).

⁵ Section 2.