



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

Voting Section - NWB  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20530

2016 DEC 20 PM 3:22

December 15, 2016

Deborah Clark  
Pinellas County Supervisor of Elections  
13001 Starkey Rd.  
Largo, Florida 33773

Dear Ms. Clark:

This letter is to advise you that the Director of the Census has determined that Pinellas County is subject to the bilingual election requirements of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, 52 U.S.C. § 10503, with respect to persons of Hispanic heritage. This determination was made pursuant to the criteria set forth in Section 203 and is based on Census data showing that there are a significant number of voting age citizens with limited-English proficiency within your jurisdiction who require materials, information, and assistance in their primary language to participate effectively in the political process. The determination became effective upon publication of the Federal Register on December 5, 2016. *See* 81 Fed. Reg. 87,532. We are enclosing a copy of the Federal Register publication, as well as a copy of relevant provisions of the Voting Rights Act and the Attorney General's minority language guidelines.

Under Section 203, all information that is provided by your jurisdiction in English about the electoral process, including registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, or assistance, as well as information provided at the polling places and the voting booths, must be provided in the language of members of the covered language group to the extent needed to allow them to participate effectively in the electoral process and all voting-connected activities. The requirement applies to information that is communicated orally as well as in writing, but does not require that information in the minority language be provided to people who have no need for it. The obligations apply to all elections conducted by your jurisdiction. The same duty applies to any other governmental units within your jurisdiction, such as school districts or municipalities, to the extent they conduct voter registration or elections.

The enclosed guidelines provide more specific guidance on the requirements of Section 203. For example, Sections 55.19 and 55.20 provide information concerning written material, and oral assistance and publicity, respectively. Section 55.17 discusses the process of "targeting" information in the minority language to people who need it, and Section 55.16 emphasizes the importance of ongoing communication with the jurisdiction's minority language community. Section 55.12 of the guidelines addresses historically unwritten languages.

A successful minority language election program requires close, ongoing consultation with all segments of the affected minority community. Such consultation assists in ensuring

accurate translation of election materials and identifying the best ways to disseminate election-related information to the language minority community. In addition, the involvement of members of the language minority community is essential in meeting your obligation to timely identify, hire, and train prospective bilingual poll officials to be placed at all precincts at which they may be needed during upcoming elections.

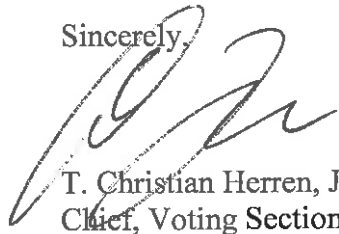
Bilingual election programs may differ from one another based on particular local circumstances and the needs of the local minority language community. However, there are elements that are common to all successful programs, such as:

- Ongoing consultation with the relevant language minority community;
- Procedures for accurate translation of election materials into the minority language (e.g., translation by a trained translator, review by community groups);
- Publicity, including use of minority language media, and selection of sites for posting or distributing materials;
- Procedures to ensure opportunities for bilingual assistance in the voter registration process for language minority voters;
- Procedures for selecting polling sites to have bilingual poll officials, and the identification, recruitment, and training of bilingual poll officials;
- Procedures for training all poll workers on the rights of language minority voters;
- Procedures for updating the language minority program based on population shifts or other new information;
- Procedures for oral translation and assistance, and for obtaining answers to questions at the election offices and polling places;
- Backup procedures to ensure the availability of bilingual poll officials and election materials that can be put into place promptly, if necessary;
- Record keeping (lists of bilingual poll officials, details of outreach).

The elements outlined above are neither mandatory nor exhaustive. A successful program will be tailored to local needs and crafted in close consultation with the local language minority community. We do hope, however, that they are helpful to you in ensuring an effective bilingual election program. Additional information is available on the Voting Section website at [www.justice.gov/crt/voting-section](http://www.justice.gov/crt/voting-section).

Finally, we are available to provide you with additional guidance and answer questions about compliance plans. Please feel free to contact Deputy Chief Bert Russ by phone at 1-800-253-3931.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Herren', written over the word 'Sincerely,'.

T. Christian Herren, Jr.  
Chief, Voting Section

Enclosures