
SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5051

State of Washington

68th Legislature

2023 Regular Session

By Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Wellman, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Keiser, Kuderer, Nobles, Pedersen, Rolfes, Saldaña, Warnick, and C. Wilson)

1 AN ACT Relating to language understanding of documents used in
2 dissolution proceedings; and adding new sections to chapter 26.09
3 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 26.09
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 In any matter brought pursuant to domestic relations proceedings
8 under this chapter:

9 (1) A court must provide translated standard forms to a limited
10 English proficiency party or a deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing
11 party when the party requests translated standard forms, or when the
12 court finds good cause to provide the party translated standard
13 forms. The court must provide translated standard forms pursuant to
14 this subsection at no cost to the party.

15 (2) A court may order sight translation of standard forms to a
16 limited English proficiency party or a deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of
17 hearing party when the court finds good cause to require sight
18 translation of standard forms. The interpreter appointed for this
19 purpose for a person with limited English proficiency must be an
20 interpreter certified or registered by the administrative office of
21 the courts pursuant to chapter 2.43 RCW or a qualified interpreter

1 registered by the administrative office of the courts in a
2 noncertified language, or where the necessary language is not
3 certified or registered, the interpreter must be qualified by the
4 judicial officer pursuant to chapter 2.43 RCW. In the event the party
5 who is deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing relies on any form of a
6 signed language, the interpreter appointed for this purpose must be
7 an interpreter appointed pursuant to chapter 2.42 RCW. An interpreter
8 appointed pursuant to this subsection must be provided at no cost to
9 the party.

10 (3) A court must give special consideration on whether good cause
11 exists to order a sight translation of standard forms pursuant to
12 subsection (2) of this section in matters involving the creation of a
13 permanent parenting plan under RCW 26.09.184.

14 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** A new section is added to chapter 26.09
15 RCW to read as follows:

16 (1) By July 1, 2024, the administrative office of the courts
17 shall:

18 (a) Develop and distribute standard forms for petitions and
19 orders issued under this chapter, which must be made available online
20 to view and download at no cost;

21 (b) Develop and distribute information regarding domestic
22 relations proceedings under this chapter, which must be made
23 available online to view and download at no cost. The information
24 must include an explanation of how a judgment or order may be vacated
25 or modified pursuant to RCW 4.72.010(4);

26 (c) Determine the significant non-English-speaking or limited
27 English-speaking populations in the state. The administrative office
28 of the courts shall then arrange for translation of the standard
29 forms and information required by this section into the languages
30 spoken by at least the top five significant non-English-speaking or
31 limited English-speaking populations, and shall distribute a master
32 copy of the translated standard forms and information to all superior
33 court clerks, superior courts, and to the Washington supreme court's
34 interpreter commission. Such materials must be updated and
35 distributed if needed due to relevant changes in the law.

36 (2) All superior court clerks' offices shall make available the
37 standard forms and information required under this section.

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