



Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** 34666      **Version:** 2      **Name:** Substitute - Prohibiting the use of machine translation for official City of Madison communications.

**Type:** Resolution      **Status:** Passed

**File created:** 7/1/2016      **In control:** COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE (ended 4/2017)

**On agenda:** 9/20/2016      **Final action:** 9/20/2016

**Enactment date:** 9/22/2016      **Enactment #:** RES-16-00741

**Title:** SUBSTITUTE - Prohibiting the use of machine translation for official City of Madison communications, including the City website and directing the Department of Civil Rights to develop a comprehensive language access plan to be submitted to the Common Council by June 2017.

**Sponsors:** Shiva Bidar, Sara Eskrich, Sheri Carter, Ledell Zellers, Denise DeMarb, Marsha A. Rummel, Maurice S. Cheeks

**Indexes:**

**Code sections:**

**Attachments:** 1. Emails Re 34666 Machine Translation Resolution.pdf

| Date      | Ver. | Action By  | Action  | Result |
|-----------|------|--|---|--------|
| 9/20/2016 | 2    | COMMON COUNCIL   | Adopt   | Pass   |
| 9/6/2016  | 2    | COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE (ended 4/2017) | RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL TO ADOPT - REPORT OF OFFICER   | Pass   |
| 8/25/2016 | 2    | DISABILITY RIGHTS COMMISSION                           |   |        |
| 7/21/2016 | 1    | EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION                         | Return to Lead with the Recommendation for Approval | Pass   |
| 7/12/2016 | 1    | AFFIRMATIVE ACTION COMMISSION                          |   |        |
| 7/5/2016  | 1    | COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE (ended 4/2017) | Refer   |        |
| 7/5/2016  | 1    | COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE (ended 4/2017) | Refer   |        |
| 7/5/2016  | 1    | COMMON COUNCIL ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITTEE (ended 4/2017) | Refer   |        |
| 7/5/2016  | 1    | COMMON COUNCIL   | Referred  | Pass   |
| 7/5/2016  | 1    | Council Office   | Referred for Introduction                           |        |

**Fiscal Note**

Information Technology is currently working on a project for the Madison Police Department which uses Google Translate. There is no cost to use Google Translate and Information Technology estimates the staff time will be minor and can be funded with existing resources.

Rates for interpreters range from by the word (for example, Spanish translation could cost \$60 for less than 300 words and \$120 for between 301 and 500 words) to by the hour (Spanish \$100 per hour).

If agencies determine they would like to have projects translated, a separate budget amendment resolution funding costs for human translators may be necessary.

The development of the comprehensive language access plan will be accomplished with existing resources. The Department of Civil Rights anticipates that there may be additional costs associated with the implementation of the plan which would be requested as part of the 2018 operating budget process.

**Title**

SUBSTITUTE - Prohibiting the use of machine translation for official City of Madison communications, including the City website **and directing the Department of Civil Rights to develop a comprehensive language access plan to be submitted to the Common Council by June 2017.**

**Body**

WHEREAS, the City of Madison is home to 15.2% residents over 5 years of age who speak a language other than English at home, many of whom are limited English proficient (LEP); and,

WHEREAS, accurate communication with its residents is of the highest priority for the City; and,

WHEREAS, the City Department of Civil Rights has created a Language Assistance Program to ensure compliance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and to provide equal access to and full participation in all City services, programs and activities; and,

**WHEREAS, machine translation is the translation of text by a computer software, with no human involvement and can also be referred to as automated translation, automatic translation or instant translation; and,**

WHEREAS, while machine translation improves every year, such translation does not provide reliable and accurate translation and is not an accepted practice for critical communications such as legal information, program eligibility forms, financial transactions, diplomatic communications, and other vital communications; and,

WHEREAS, inaccurately translated City communications can lead to misunderstandings and confusion among LEP residents in addition to negatively reflecting on the City's professional standards; and,

WHEREAS, such misunderstandings by LEP residents may create barriers to equal access to City services and lead to missed deadlines and payments that could lead to fines and court action; and,

WHEREAS, the City should not tolerate such a disparate outcome when communicating with its LEP residents,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Madison shall use professional, qualified human translation for official communications and its websites, and shall not use automated machine translation for the same; **and,**

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Civil Rights (DCR) will review its language access plan through appropriate city committees and community engagement. DCR will submit a comprehensive language access plan to the Common Council by June 2017.**