

English Now Language Of Music City  
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NASHVILLE, TENN. - Nashville's city council has voted to adopt English as its official language, following similar moves by several smaller cities across the country.

After months of debate, the Metro Council voted 23-14 on Tuesday to require all government communications to be in English, except when multilingual communications are required by federal rules or are needed "to protect or promote public health, safety or welfare."

The exceptions were added after the city attorney said the bill's original language was unconstitutional. Some supporters and opponents of the measure said the exceptions mean the law would have little effect on city business.

The measure moves on to Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell, who had not said by Wednesday whether he will sign it, veto it or allow it to pass into law without his signature.

Bill sponsor Councilman Eric Crafton said the change offers an incentive for immigrants to learn English.

Opponents say the new law would hurt the city's image.

Nashville, a city of more than 600,000, is home to the nation's largest Kurdish community and has been a resettlement site for refugees from Africa and Southeast Asia. The Hispanic immigrant population also has boomed, and researchers say Nashville's foreign-born population has grown 350 percent since 1990.