

AN ACT

To establish a Marshall Islands Language Commission, to encourage the preservation, development and use of the Marshallese language.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE NITLJELA OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS:

1 Section 1. Short title.

2 This Act may be cited as the Marshall Islands Language
3 Commission Act 1982.

4 Section 2. Purpose.

5 (1) There is evidence that the Marshallese language may be
6 deteriorating, and there is therefore a possibility that it may follow
7 the Chamorro and Hawaiian Languages and practically disappear. If this
8 happens, the whole of Marshallese culture will be in danger.

9 (2) Accordingly, there is a need for a positive program not
10 only to preserve the language but also to help it develop in such a way
11 as to be able to express the new ideas of the modern world so that it may
12 be used for all purposes. In somewhat the same way the Constitution of
13 Vanuatu declares Bislama to be an official language, provides that the
14 Republic must protect the different local languages which are part of
15 the national heritage and may declare one of them as a national language,
16 and further provides that any citizen may obtain in the official language
17 that he uses, government services. In Africa, too, there has been a
18 deliberate attempt to develop the Swahili language as a language of the law.

19 (3) The aim of this Act is to set up a Commission to preserve
20 and develop the Marshallese language in order that it may be used in this
21 way.

1 Section 3. The Commission.

2 (1) A Marshall Islands Language Commission is hereby
3 established.

4 (2) The Commission shall consist of a Chairman
5 and such other members as the Cabinet appoints, with the
6 concurrence of the Nitijela expressed by resolution.

7 (3) The members of the Commission shall be persons
8 well versed in the Marshallese language and culture, and may
9 include also persons with specialized knowledge of the science
10 of linguistics or with experience elsewhere of the type of
11 work that the Commission is established to do.

12 (4) The Commission shall determine its own procedure.

13 (5) The compensation of the members of the Commission
14 shall be specifically provided by Act.

15 Section 4. Functions of the Commission.

16 (1) The functions of the Commission are -

17 (a) to investigate methods of preserving,
18 developing and encouraging the use of the
19 Marshallese language, and to report on such
20 matters to the Cabinet and to the Nitijela
21 through the Ministers; and

22 (b) to recommend action to be taken by the
23 Government of the Marshall Islands or by
24 any other person, organization or
25 authority for the preservation, development

- 1 and use of the Marshallese language; and
- 2 (c) to devise and, so far as it can, implement
- 3 an educational program on the Marshallese
- 4 language, and on the need for, and the methods of,
- 5 its preservation development and use; and
- 6 (d) to sponsor and approve standards for uniform
- 7 spelling of Marshallese words and phrases; and
- 8 (e) to prepare and publish, or to assist in the
- 9 preparation of publication of, dictionaries
- 10 and other works on the Marshallese language; and
- 11 (f) with the approval of a joint committee of the
- 12 Nitijela and the Council of Iroij, to adopt
- 13 and publish lists of new words, phrases and
- 14 grammatical forms that appear to it to be required
- 15 or desirable for the development and use of the
- 16 Marshallese language; and
- 17 (g) any other functions that are necessary or
- 18 desirable for achieving the purposes of this Act.

19 (2) The Commission may cooperate with, and seek assistance

20 from, universities and other institutions and persons interested in the

21 functions of the Commission and the achievement of the purposes of this Act.

22 (3) The Commission, with the approval of the Cabinet, may

23 solicit and accept grants, donations and other aid from any source for the

24 purposes of this Act.

25 (4) Grants, donations or aid made or given subject to

26 conditions, or for certain purposes, may be spent or used only in accordance

1 with those conditions or for those purposes.

2 Section 5. Staff, etc.

3 (1) There shall be a Secretary to the Commission, and such
4 staff as the Commission needs to perform its functions.

5 (2) The Secretary and staff of the Commission shall be
6 members of the Public Service, on either full-time or part-time secondment,
7 as arranged between the Minister and the Commission.

8 (3) Out of money lawfully available for the purpose,
9 or by arrangement with the Minister, the Commission may obtain the services
10 of specialists and consultants on aspects of its work.

11 Section 6. Assistance and co-operation.

12 It is the national duty of the Government of the Marshall
13 Islands (in particular the Department of Education), of the news media,
14 of local governments, of private and public organization and authorities,
15 and of the people generally to co-operate with and assist the Commission
16 in its work.

17 Section 7. Finance.

18 (1) A Marshallese Language Trust Fund is hereby established
19 for the specific purposes of this Act.

18 (2) The Fund is a Fund other than the Marshall Islands
21 General Fund, within the meaning and for the purposes of Article VIII,
22 Section 3(2) of the Constitution.

23 (3) There shall be paid into the Fund -

24 (a) any grants, donations or aid in cash made or given,
25 for the purposes of this Act, in accordance with

1 Section 4(3); and

2 (b) any other amounts received for the purposes of
3 the Commission or of this Act; and

4 (c) any amount appropriated by the Nitijela for the
5 purpose.

6 (4) Money may be paid out of the Fund only -

7 (a) for the purposes of the Commission and of this
8 Act; and

9 (b) with the Authority of the Secretary of Finance,
10 who shall first satisfy himself that the payment
11 is in accordance with this Act.

12 (5) A delegation under Article VIII, Section 5(1) of the
13 Constitution to expend money out of the Fund is given to the Secretary
14 of Finance.

15 (6) The Secretary of Finance shall maintain proper accounts
16 and records of the fund, and the accounts to be laid before the Nitijela
17 by the Minister of Finance under Article VIII, Section 5(4) of the
18 Constitution shall include accounts relating to the Fund.

19 Section 6. Reports.

20 (1) Any report under Section 4(1) (a) shall be presented by
21 the Minister to the Nitijela, together with his comments or the comments
22 of the Cabinet on it.

23 (2) The Commission shall, at least once in each year,
24 at such time as is fixed by the Minister, submit to the Minister, for
27 presentation to the Nitijela, a report on progress in the preservation,

1 development and use of the Marshallese language and on measures likely
 2 to ensure respect for it, and generally on the operations of the Commission
 3 and the administration of this Act, with such recommendations (if any)
 4 as it thinks proper.

5 (3) The Commission may at any other time, and shall if so
 6 directed by the Nitijela or the Minister, submit to the Minister a report
 7 on all or any aspects of the matters referred to in Subsection (2).

8 (4) The Minister may present to the Nitijela any report
 9 under Subsection (3), and shall do so if the report was directed by the
 10 Nitijela.

11 Section 9. Effective date.

12 This Act becomes effective on the date on which it becomes
 13 law.

14 Certificate

15 I hereby certify:

16 (1) that the above Nitijela Bill No. 19 has been passed by the
 17 Nitijela of the Marshall Islands on the 20th day of September, 1983, and

18 (2) that I am satisfied that Nitijela Bill No. 19 has been passed
 19 in accordance with the Constitution of the Marshall Islands and the rules
 20 of the Nitijela. I hereby place my signature before the Clerk of the
 21 Nitijela this 19th day of October, 1983.

22 /s/ Atlan Anien
 23 Atlan Anien, Speaker
 Nitijela of the Marshall Islands

24 Attest:

26 /s/ Donald F. Capelle
 27 Donald F. Capelle, Clerk
 Nitijela of the Marshall Islands

28
 29 Concurred by High Commissioner Hon. Janet McGov -10/31/83