NITIJELA OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
31ST CONSTITUTIONAL REGULAR SESSION, 2010

BILL NO.: 72ND1

P.L. 2010-45

AN
ACT

to declare a standardized spelling system for written Marshallese words and phrases.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE NITIJELA OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS:

Section 1. **Short Title.**

This Act may be cited as the Marshallese Language Orthography (Standard Spelling) Act, 2010.

Section 2. **Purpose.**

The purposes of this Act are:

(1) to declare the correct way of writing Marshallese words and phrases with the proper letters, usages and spelling; and

(2) to ensure spelling used in written publication conforms to the standardized orthography.

Section 3. **Requirement for use of Standardized Spelling Rule.**

(1) Any Government body, agency or any private institution or organization that engages in publishing of Marshallese materials as a mode of learning or communication shall conform with the Standardized Spelling Rule as set out in the Marshallese English Dictionary published by the University Press of Hawaii, as amended.

(2) The Marshallese English Dictionary is set out in *Schedule 1* to this Act.

Section 4. **Duties of the Language Commission.**

In furtherance to its functions and duties specified in Section 105 of the 39 MIRC 1, the Customary Law and Language Commission shall:

(1) declare the spelling rules in the Marshallese English Dictionary as the Standard Spelling Rule for writing Marshallese words and phrases;

(2) ensure conformity with the Standard Spelling Rule by both public and a private institution or organization; and

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(3) educate the public and including a private institution or organization on the Standard Spelling Rules.

Section 5. **Transition.**

(1) This Act shall come into force:

(a) for education, after one (1) year of standardizing the education materials including the Marshallese grammar;

(b) for other public organization, and private organization, after 2 years of fully aware and understanding the standard spelling rules.

(2) Nothing in this section shall prevent any organization either public or private to fully comply with the Act upon its coming into effect pursuant to section 6.

Section 6. **Effective Date.**

This Act shall take effect in accordance with the Constitution and the Rules of Procedures of the Nitijela.

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify:

1. That Nitijela Bill No.72ND1 was passed by the Nitijela of the Republic of the Marshall Islands on 5th day of October, 2010; and
2. That I am satisfied that Nitijela Bill No.72ND1 was passed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Rules of Procedures of the Nitijela.

I hereby place my signature before the Clerk this 26th day of October, 2010

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Attest:

Hon. Alvin T. Jacklick
Speaker
Nitijela of the Marshall Islands

Gary Ueno
Clerk
Nitijela of the Marshall Islands

Schedule 1
(Section 3)

Marshallese-English Dictionary

The Sounds of Marshallese and Rules for Spelling the Language

The basic rule for spelling Marshallese is to spell words according to their sounds. Such a spelling is said to be phonetic. Some languages have phonetic spelling, and some do not. Those that do are easier for students to learn to read and write. The information below is taken for the Marshallese-English Dictionary *published by the University of Hawai'i Press in 1976, and continues to apply to the revised version out in line in 2009. (www.trussel2.com/MOD/). It lists each sound and shows how it is spelled in several words.*

The letters used to show the sounds of the language and spell the words in this dictionary are listed here in the alphabetical order used in the dictionary. It is the same order used in English dictionaries, except that a letter with a mark follows the same letter without a mark. A brief phonetic description and a phonetic symbol are given for the sound of each letter, followed by several example words. (The term LIGHT is used to describe consonants that are pronounced with the body of the tongue in an "at rest" position for such consonants; the term HEAVY is used for consonants that have the back of the tongue raised (velarized) and the root of the tongue retracted (pharyngealized) so as to elongate the oral cavity, thereby giving the consonant a "heavier" or "darker" sound. The rounding referred to is that of the lips. This and the other phonetic terminology are explained in greater detail in MRG 2.)

a	a low back unrounded vowel	[ɑ]	*at*	'hat'
			bat	'slow'
			ta	'what?'
ā	a low front vowel	[æ]	*āj*	'thatch'
			māj	'eye'
			pā	'arm, hand'
b	a heavy bilabial stop	[$b^{ɯ}$]	*ba*	'say'
			bwe	'because'
			ob	'chest'
d	a light retroflex trill	[ɹ]	*di*	'bone'
			addi	'finger'
			ad	'our'
e	a mid front vowel	[e] or [ɛ]	*ae*	'gather'
			ae	'current'
			nen	'a tree'
			ded	'size'

i	a high front vowel	[i]	*ip*	'crooked'
			nin	'pound'
			ni	'coconut'
j	a light dental stop or affricate	[t^y] or [c]	*jañ*	'cry'
			bajjek	'just'
			ṃaj	'eel'
k	a velar stop, unrounded or rounded	[k] or [k^w]	*ke*	'porpoise'
			kwe	'you'
			akki	'fingernail'
			bōk	'bring, take'
			bok	'sand'
l	a light lateral	[l^y]	*leddik*	'girl'
			pālle	'Caucasian'
			al	'sing'
ļ	a heavy lateral, unrounded or rounded	[$l^ɯ$] or [l^w]	*ļaddik*	'boy'
			ļwe	'pond'
			ļōļļap	'old man'
			ļōļ	'moldy'
			toļ	'mountain'
m	a light bilabial nasal	[m^y]	*maañ*	'pandanus leaf'
			am	'our'
ṃ	a heavy bilabial nasal	[$m^ɯ$]	*ṃaan*	'front'
			ṃweo	'the house'
			kōṃṃan	'make, do'
			aṃ	'your'
n	a light dental nasal	[n^y]	*ne*	'leg, foot'
			ennọ	'taste good'
			en	'let him'
ṇ	a heavy dental nasal, unrounded or rounded	[$n^ɯ$] or [n^w]	*ṇe*	'that'
			eṇṇōjṇōj	'cracking
			ṇọb	sound'
			eṇ	'popping
			tōṇ	sound'
			toṇ	'that'
				'ton'
				'tune'

ñ	a velar nasal, unrounded or rounded	[ŋ] or [ŋ^{w}]	*ña*	'I'
			aeñwāñwā	'clamor'
			iññа	'yes'
			añ	'wind'
			boñ	'night'
o	a mid back rounded vowel	[o] or [ɔ]	*oror*	'fence'
			jojo	'chick'
			jojo	'flying fish'
			rūkōbbaoo	'chicken thief'
			roro	'chant'
ọ	a low back rounded vowel	[ɒ]	*ọọj*	'horse'
			kọọt	'steal'
			jọ	'start'
ō	a mid back unrounded vowel	[ə] or [ʌ]	*ōrōr*	'cut in strips'
			ō	'lionfish'
			tōōḷ	'comb tooth'
			ḷōḷō	'wreathe'
			aō	'my'
			aō	'swim'
p	a light bilabial stop	[p^{y}]	*pata*	'war'
			ippān	'with him'
			jaap	'red snapper'
r	a heavy retroflex trill, unrounded or rounded	[r^{ɯ}] or [r^{w}]	*rōk*	'south'
			rot	'kind'
			rorror	'to bark'
			ar	'lagoon beach'
t	a heavy dental stop	[t^{ɯ}]	*tata*	'very'
			etto	'long ago'
			atat	'wear a hat'
u	a high back rounded vowel	[u]	*uṃ*	'earth oven'
			kuuṃ	'comb'
			bu	'gun'
ū	a high back unrounded vowel	[ɯ]	*ūroj*	'bother'
			būb	'trigger fish'
			būbū	'grandchild'

w	a rounded velar glide	[w]	*wiwi*	'blubber'
			jowan	'lazy'
			uwi	'delicious'
y	an unrounded palatal glide	[y]	*yiō*	'year (iiō)'
			yokwe	'aloha (iọkwe)'
			yuk	'you (eok)'

Note: The last letter is used in only a few words, such as those given as examples.