

NC Charlotte Professor Available for Comment on Plain Writing Act

On September 27, the Plain Writing Act was unanimously passed by the Senate, sent back to the House for reconciliation (the House passed the bill in March), and is now headed for signature by President Obama. The bill requires the federal government to write documents, such as tax returns, federal college aid applications, and Veterans Administration forms in simple language.

“This bill helps all citizens by providing government information in plain language – using proven writing and design strategies that make it easy for the intended audience to understand, find, and use the information,” said Dr. Deborah S. Bosley, associate professor of English at UNC Charlotte and international expert in plain language.

Rep. Bruce Braley (Iowa) and Senator Daniel K. Akaka (Hawaii) worked tirelessly, with support from the Center for Plain Language, a non-profit citizens’ advocacy group in Washington, for two years to get this Act passed. Representative Mel Watt from Charlotte was a co-sponsor of the bill in the House.

Bosley is on the board of the Center for Plain Language and writes the Center’s blog, “Plain Language Matters,” at www.centerforplainlanguage.wordpress.com.

“If we are to function as full, participating citizens in this democracy, we must be able to understand the information we receive from our government,” Bosley wrote in an April editorial in the *Charlotte Observer* in support of the bill. “Clear information is, I believe, a civil right. How can we agree to something, sign our names, obey compliance rules, receive benefits and services, or even know who we're voting for if information is not written and designed for easy understanding?”

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Editor’s note: Deborah Bosley is available for comment about the Plain Writing Act. P.R. Contact: Buffie Stephens, 704-687-5830, buffiestephens@uncc.edu.