

House Resolution Number

Whereas, closed captioning is an assistive technology designed to provide access to television for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. Unlike subtitles, closed captioning is hidden as encoded data transmitted within the television signal, and provides information about background noise and sound effects. A viewer wishing to see closed captioning must use a set-top decoder or a television with built-in decoder circuitry, which since 1993 are included in all television sets with screens of thirteen inches or larger; and

Whereas, as directed by Congress in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted rules which became effective January 1, 1998, which require closed captioning of most television programming; and

Whereas, the electronic newsroom captioning technique that creates captions from a news script computer or teleprompter is commonly used for live newscasts, but only material that is scripted can be captioned using this technique. As a result, live field reports, breaking news, and sports and weather updates may not be captioned; and

Whereas, "real-time" captioning, which began in 1982, is any methodology that converts an entire audio portion of a live program to captions; and

Whereas, while many broadcasters complain about the cost of real-time captioning compared to the virtually free process of connecting their teleprompter system to the caption encoder, only real-time captioning provides people who are deaf and hard of hearing with the same information that the hearing community enjoys; and

Whereas, numerous research studies have shown that captioned television provides a successful learning environment for deaf and hard of hearing students, and the benefits extend to hearing students as well, including those students with special educational needs; and

Whereas, just by watching captioned television, young children who are just learning to read are able to significantly improve their reading skills, people learning English can improve their language and vocabulary skills, and inexperienced readers and illiterate adults can augment their reading skills; and

Whereas, the Federal Communications Commission has recognized the many social benefits of television captioning, and has mandated that with a few exceptions 100% of all new television programming must be captioned by the year 2006. In addition, the FCC has recognized the limitations of the electronic newsroom, and has mandated that only real-time captioning of news broadcasts will meet their captioning requirements for all stations in the 25 major media markets around the country, including St. Louis; and

Whereas, while the efforts of the FCC are greatly appreciated by persons who are deaf and hard of hearing, the requirements for captioning do not go far enough to ensure that our deaf and hard of hearing community can enjoy the same benefits that the hearing community is afforded for news broadcasts:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that we, the members of the Missouri House of Representatives, Ninety-second General Assembly, urge the Federal Communications Commission to require all television stations to provide real-time captioning for all local news, weather, and sports programming by January 1, 2006, and only provide exceptions for television stations that would have to expend more than 2% of their annual gross income to provide real-time captioning of their news broadcasts:

Be it further resolved that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for Michael K. Powell, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission.

Offered by _____
Representative Danielle Moore
District No. 20

Representative Vicki A. Walker
District No. 50

I, Catherine L. Hanaway, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ninety-second General Assembly, Second Regular Session, do certify that the above is a true and correct copy of House Resolution No. ____, adopted _____, 2004.

Catherine L. Hanaway, Speaker