

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1568

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE BARNES.

3225H.011

JOSEPH ENGLER, Chief Clerk

AN ACT

To amend chapter 209, RSMo, by adding thereto one new section relating to communication access services.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the state of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 209, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto one new section, to be
2 known as section 209.247, to read as follows:

209.247. 1. As used in this section, the following terms mean:

2 (1) "Commission", the Missouri commission for the deaf and hard of hearing;
3 (2) "Communication access service", shall include, but not be limited to, the
4 following:

5 (a) Communication access real-time translation services;

6 (b) Notetakers;

7 (c) Open and closed captioning services;

8 (d) Support service providers for the deaf-blind; and

9 (e) Any other effective method of making aurally delivered information available
10 to individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing;

11 (3) "Communication access service provider", an individual who is trained to
12 offer a communication access service to communicate aurally delivered information to
13 individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.

14 2. The commission shall establish a statewide communication access services
15 program to collaborate with state and local agencies and communication access service
16 providers to create a registry of providers in every region of the state, rural and urban,

EXPLANATION — Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets ~~thus~~ in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted from the law. Matter in **bold-face** type in the above bill is proposed language.

17 that offer accommodations to individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.

18 The commission shall:

19 (1) Collaborate with these agencies and organizations to ensure the availability
20 and coordination of communication access services throughout the state;

21 (2) Establish standards for communication access service providers including,
22 but not limited to, minimum standards of training, minimum standards for equipment
23 or technology used to support communication access services, and any other
24 qualification the commission deems necessary;

25 (3) Establish a process by which communication access service providers may
26 apply to be placed on the registry;

27 (4) Create and maintain an informational website for businesses, local and state
28 agencies, and individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing to access the
29 registry of communication access service providers available throughout the state,
30 organized by region;

31 (5) Provide assistance in enabling businesses and agencies seeking to provide
32 effective communication through communication access services to an individual who is
33 deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing to contact communication access service providers
34 and to access other available accommodations;

35 (6) Provide a list of available resources for businesses, agencies, or individuals to
36 assist in paying for these communication access services including, but not limited to,
37 income-based assistance programs and publicly funded programs;

38 (7) Subject to appropriations, distribute grants to assist individuals who are
39 deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing, or businesses or agencies serving such individuals,
40 with accessing communication access services in this state; and

41 (8) Submit a report to the governor and general assembly by December thirty-
42 first of each year that includes information about utilization of the registry; the role of
43 the program in connecting businesses, agencies, and individuals with communication
44 access service providers; any challenges faced in the various regions of the state in
45 providing and maintaining adequate communication access services; the needs of
46 businesses, agencies, and individuals in accessing and paying for communication access
47 services; and the programs provided by the state and federal governments that can
48 assist in providing or financing such services, as well as any recommendations to
49 improve access to such services.

50 3. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury the "Communication Access
51 Services Fund", which shall consist of moneys appropriated to the fund and any gifts,
52 donations, grants, and bequests from individuals, private organizations, foundations, or
53 other sources for the purpose of distributing grants under this section. The state

54 treasurer shall be the custodian of the fund. In accordance with sections 30.170 and
55 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund shall be a dedicated
56 fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in the fund shall be used by the commission
57 solely for the distribution of grants under this section.

58 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080 to the contrary, any moneys
59 remaining in the fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the
60 general revenue fund.

61 (3) The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the fund in the same manner as
62 other funds are invested. Any interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be
63 credited to the fund.

64 4. The commission shall promulgate rules to implement the provisions of this
65 section, including rules on the process for distributing grants under subdivision (7) of
66 subsection 2 of this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in
67 section 536.010, that is created under the authority delegated in this section shall
68 become effective only if it complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter
69 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable
70 and if any of the powers vested with the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to
71 review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently
72 held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking authority and any rule proposed or
73 adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.

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