

SS#2 SCS HCS HB 1840 - COMMUNICATIONS INVOLVING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

This bill relates to communications involving persons with disabilities.

MISSOURI COMMISSION OF THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING (SECTIONS 161.412 and 209.427)

Current law governs provisions on grants provided by the Missouri Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, with a cap on the total amount of grants of no more than \$300,000 annually. This bill repeals that annual cap.

Under this bill, the Commission must establish a statewide communication access services program to improve compliance with the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act for agencies and businesses by coordinating resources, filling service gaps, and assisting with costs related to accommodations. The Commission will develop a statewide registry of service providers, create a process for communication access service, establish training and equipment standards, maintain an informational website, provide training, conduct outreach, and submit an annual report to the Governor and General Assembly, as described in the bill. The Commission will also, subject to appropriation, finance requests for assistance in providing communication access services and administer scholarships for professional development, internships, and certification testing.

The bill creates the "Communication Access Services Fund" which will be a dedicated fund and, upon appropriation, moneys in the Fund will be used by the Commission for the salary of the program manager, distribution of financial assistance for communication access services, and distribution of scholarships under this bill.

MASON'S LAW (Section 301.287)

This bill establishes "Mason's Law". Beginning January 1, 2027, a Missouri resident with a health condition or disability that limits or impairs their ability to effectively communicate with law enforcement may apply to the Department of Revenue for a designation associated with their motor vehicle license plate number. The application for the designation will be on a form developed by the Department and signed by a physician or psychologists, as described in the bill, certifying that the applicant or the applicant's child, parent, or spouse has a physical or mental health condition that is likely to impair the

ability to communicate effectively with law enforcement and that such impairment will persist for at least five years. The Highway Patrol must make an entry in the Missouri Uniform Law Enforcement System concerning the designation and such entry will remain active for five years unless reactivated.

The Department of Public Safety will issue guidance and education materials to all law enforcement agencies in this state to promote awareness of the designation established in this bill.

These provisions regarding Mason's Law will be effective as soon as the technology is available to implement these provisions.

#### PURPLE ALERT SYSTEM (Section 650.535)

This bill establishes "RJ's Law." The bill creates within the Department of Public Safety a program called the "Purple Alert System" to aid in the identification and location of missing persons with "developmental disabilities", as defined in the bill, whose disappearance poses a credible threat of immediate danger or serious bodily harm to themselves.

Prior to July 1, 2027, the Department must, along with the State Highway Patrol, Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Senior Services, the State lottery, and local law enforcement, develop a training program and alert system for missing persons with developmental disabilities and establish policies and procedures for responding to a reported missing person emergency for missing persons with developmental disabilities. The Department of Public safety will administer and create rules for the implementation of the alert system.