

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

# SENATE BILL NO. 766

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR LEWIS.

2509S.02I

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

## 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  
2 one new section, to be known as section 209.247, to read as  
3 follows:

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

3 (1) "Commission", the Missouri commission for the deaf  
4 and hard of hearing;

5 (2) "Communication access service", shall include, but  
6 not be limited to, the following:

7 (a) Communication access realtime translation services;

8 (b) Notetakers;

9 (c) Open and closed captioning services;

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

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

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

18           2. The commission shall establish a statewide  
19 communication access services program to collaborate with  
20 state and local agencies and communication access service  
21 providers to create a registry of providers in every region  
22 of the state, rural and urban, that offer accommodations to  
23 individuals who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing.

24 The commission shall:

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

28           (2) Establish standards for communication access  
29 service providers, including, but not limited to, minimum  
30 standards of training, minimum standards for equipment or  
31 technology used to support communication access services,  
32 and any other qualification the commission deems necessary;

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

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

40           (5) Provide assistance in enabling businesses and  
41 agencies seeking to provide effective communication through  
42 communication access services to an individual who is deaf,  
43 deaf-blind, or hard of hearing to contact communication  
44 service providers, as well as accessing other available  
45 accommodations;

46           (6) Provide a list of available resources for  
47 businesses, agencies, or individuals to assist in paying for  
48 these communication access services, including, but not

49 limited to, income-based assistance programs and publicly-  
50 funded programs;

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

56 (8) Submit a report to the governor and general  
57 assembly by the thirty-first of December each year that  
58 includes information about utilization of the registry; the  
59 role of the program in connecting businesses, agencies, and  
60 individuals with communication access service providers; any  
61 challenges faced in the various regions of the state in  
62 providing and maintaining adequate communication access  
63 services; the needs of businesses, agencies, and individuals  
64 in accessing and paying for communication access services;  
65 and the programs provided by the state and federal  
66 governments that can assist in providing or financing such  
67 services, as well as any recommendations to improve access  
68 to such services.

69 3. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury  
70 the "Communication Access Services Fund", which shall  
71 consist of moneys appropriated to the fund and any gifts,  
72 donations, grants, and bequests from individuals, private  
73 organizations, foundations, or other sources for the purpose  
74 of distributing grants under this section. The state  
75 treasurer shall be the custodian of the fund. In accordance  
76 with sections 30.170 and 30.180, the state treasurer may  
77 approve disbursements. The fund shall be a dedicated fund  
78 and, upon appropriation, moneys in the fund shall be used by  
79 the commission solely for the distribution of grants under  
80 this section.

81           (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080  
82 to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end  
83 of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the  
84 general revenue fund.

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

89           4. The commission shall promulgate rules to implement  
90 the provisions of this section, including the process for  
91 distributing grants under subdivision (7) of subsection 2 of  
92 this section. Any rule or portion of a rule, as that term  
93 is defined in section 536.010, that is created under the  
94 authority delegated in this section shall become effective  
95 only if it complies with and is subject to all of the  
96 provisions of chapter 536 and, if applicable, section  
97 536.028. This section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and  
98 if any of the powers vested with the general assembly  
99 pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to delay the effective  
100 date, or to disapprove and annul a rule are subsequently  
101 held unconstitutional, then the grant of rulemaking  
102 authority and any rule proposed or adopted after August 28,  
103 2025, shall be invalid and void.

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