



**93RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
**State of Illinois**  
**2003 and 2004**  
**SB2517**

Introduced 2/3/2004, by John J. Cullerton

**SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:**

New Act  
30 ILCS 105/5.625 new

Creates the Accessible Electronic Information Act. Requires the Secretary of State, as the State Librarian, to develop and implement a program of grants to qualified entities to make newspapers and other time-sensitive printed material available to the blind and disabled in accessible formats produced on a multi-state basis through computer and telecommunication technology. Funds the grants through a surcharge established by the Illinois Commerce Commission on local exchange telecommunications company subscribers. Amends the State Finance Act to create the necessary special fund. Effective immediately.

LRB093 17930 JAM 43613 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT  
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning accessible electronic information.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Accessible Electronic Information Act.

6 Section 5. Legislative findings. The Legislature finds and  
7 declares all of the following:

8 (a) Thousands of citizens in this State have disabilities  
9 (including blindness or visual impairment) that prevent them  
10 from using conventional print material.

11 (b) The State fulfills an important responsibility by  
12 providing books and magazines prepared in Braille, audio, and  
13 large-type formats made available to eligible blind and  
14 disabled persons.

15 (c) The technology, transcription methods, and means of  
16 distribution used for these materials are labor-intensive and  
17 cannot support rapid dissemination to individuals in rural and  
18 urban areas throughout the State.

19 (d) Lack of direct and prompt access to information  
20 included in newspapers, magazines, newsletters, schedules,  
21 announcements, and other time-sensitive materials limits  
22 educational opportunities, literacy, and full participation in  
23 society by blind and disabled persons.

24 Section 10. Definitions. As used in this Act:

25 "Accessible electronic information service" means news and  
26 other timely information (including newspapers) provided to  
27 eligible individuals from a multi-state service center, using  
28 high-speed computers and telecommunications technology for  
29 interstate acquisition of content and rapid distribution in a  
30 form appropriate for use by such individuals.

31 "Blind and disabled persons" means those individuals who

1 are eligible for library loan services through the Library of  
2 Congress and the State Library for the Blind and Physically  
3 Handicapped pursuant to 36 CFR 701.10(b).

4 "Director" means the State Librarian.

5 "Qualified entity" means an agency, instrumentality, or  
6 political subdivision of the State or a nonprofit organization  
7 that:

8 (1) provides interstate access for eligible persons to  
9 read daily newspapers by producing audio editions by  
10 computer; and

11 (2) provides a means of program administration and  
12 reader registration on the Internet.

13

14 Section 15. Accessible electronic information service  
15 program. The Director by rule shall develop and implement a  
16 program of grants to qualified entities for the provision of  
17 accessible electronic information service to blind and  
18 disabled persons throughout Illinois. The grants shall be  
19 funded through appropriations from the Accessible Electronic  
20 Information Service Fund established in Section 20.

21 Section 20. Accessible Electronic Information Service  
22 Fund.

23 (a) In order to support the program described in Section  
24 15, the Illinois Commerce Commission shall require all local  
25 exchange telecommunications companies to impose a periodic  
26 surcharge on bills rendered to all local exchange  
27 telecommunications company subscribers.

28 (b) The Illinois Commerce Commission, in consultation with  
29 the Director, shall annually determine the amount of the  
30 surcharge based on the amount of funding necessary to support  
31 the program described in Section 15.

32 (c) The amount of the surcharge may be computed as a  
33 portion of any other surcharge required under existing law,  
34 order, or regulation but shall not increase such surcharge by

1 more than one cent per line per month.

2 (d) Local exchange telecommunications companies shall  
3 remit the amount received from the surcharge to the Director  
4 less any amount allowed for administration, in accordance with  
5 a schedule determined by the Illinois Commerce Commission in  
6 consultation with the Director. The amounts remitted shall be  
7 deposited into the Accessible Electronic Information Service  
8 Fund, a special fund created in the State treasury that may be  
9 appropriated only for the purposes of this Act.

10 Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding  
11 Section 5.625 as follows:

12 (30 ILCS 105/5.625 new)

13 Sec. 5.625. The Accessible Electronic Information Service  
14 Fund.

15 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
16 becoming law.