



Sen. John J. Cullerton

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1 AMENDMENT TO SENATE BILL 2517

2 AMENDMENT NO. _____. Amend Senate Bill 2517 by replacing
3 everything after the enacting clause with the following:

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.

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

2 "Accessible electronic information service" means news and
3 other timely information (including newspapers) provided to
4 eligible individuals from a multi-state service center, using
5 high-speed computers and telecommunications technology for
6 interstate acquisition of content and rapid distribution in a
7 form appropriate for use by such individuals.

8 "Blind and disabled persons" means those individuals who
9 are eligible for library loan services through the Library of
10 Congress and the State Library for the Blind and Physically
11 Handicapped pursuant to 36 CFR 701.10(b).

12 "Director" means the State Librarian.

13 "Qualified entity" means an agency, instrumentality, or
14 political subdivision of the State or a nonprofit organization
15 that:

16 (1) provides interstate access for eligible persons to
17 read daily newspapers by producing audio editions by
18 computer; and

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

21

22 Section 15. Accessible electronic information service
23 program. The Director by rule shall develop and implement a
24 program of grants to qualified entities for the provision of
25 accessible electronic information service to blind and
26 disabled persons throughout Illinois. The grants shall be
27 funded through appropriations from the Accessible Electronic
28 Information Service Fund established in Section 20.

29 Section 20. Accessible Electronic Information Service
30 Fund.

31 (a) In order to support the program described in Section
32 15, the Illinois Commerce Commission shall enter into an

1 agreement with the Director for the purpose of recovering the
2 cost by using the rate recovery mechanism established by the
3 Commission pursuant to Section 13-703(c) of the Public
4 Utilities Act.

5 (b) The Illinois Commerce Commission, in consultation with
6 the Director, shall annually determine the amount to be
7 recovered based on the amount of funding necessary to support
8 the program described in Section 15.

9 (c) The portion of the rate recovery amount collected under
10 Section 13-703(c) of the Public Utilities Act that is
11 attributable to the percentage determined by the Illinois
12 Commerce Commission under subsection (b) of this Section shall
13 promptly be remitted to the Director by the Illinois
14 Telecommunications Access Corporation or its successor
15 designee under Section 13-703 of the Public Utilities Act. The
16 amounts remitted shall be deposited into the Accessible
17 Electronic Information Service Fund, a special fund created in
18 the State treasury that may be appropriated only for the
19 purposes of this Act.

20 Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding
21 Section 5.625 as follows:

22 (30 ILCS 105/5.625 new)

23 Sec. 5.625. The Accessible Electronic Information Service
24 Fund.

25 Section 95. The Public Utilities Act is amended by changing
26 Section 13-703 and adding Section 13-703.1 as follows:

27 (220 ILCS 5/13-703) (from Ch. 111 2/3, par. 13-703)

28 (Section scheduled to be repealed on July 1, 2005)

29 Sec. 13-703. (a) The Commission shall design and implement
30 a program whereby each telecommunications carrier providing

1 local exchange service shall provide a telecommunications
2 device capable of servicing the needs of those persons with a
3 hearing or speech disability together with a single party line,
4 at no charge additional to the basic exchange rate, to any
5 subscriber who is certified as having a hearing or speech
6 disability by a licensed physician, speech-language
7 pathologist, audiologist or a qualified State agency and to any
8 subscriber which is an organization serving the needs of those
9 persons with a hearing or speech disability as determined and
10 specified by the Commission pursuant to subsection (d).

11 (b) The Commission shall design and implement a program,
12 whereby each telecommunications carrier providing local
13 exchange service shall provide a telecommunications relay
14 system, using third party intervention to connect those persons
15 having a hearing or speech disability with persons of normal
16 hearing by way of intercommunications devices and the telephone
17 system, making available reasonable access to all phases of
18 public telephone service to persons who have a hearing or
19 speech disability. In order to design a telecommunications
20 relay system which will meet the requirements of those persons
21 with a hearing or speech disability available at a reasonable
22 cost, the Commission shall initiate an investigation and
23 conduct public hearings to determine the most cost-effective
24 method of providing telecommunications relay service to those
25 persons who have a hearing or speech disability when using
26 telecommunications devices and therein solicit the advice,
27 counsel, and physical assistance of Statewide nonprofit
28 consumer organizations that serve persons with hearing or
29 speech disabilities in such hearings and during the development
30 and implementation of the system. The Commission shall phase in
31 this program, on a geographical basis, as soon as is
32 practicable, but no later than June 30, 1990.

33 (c) The Commission shall establish a rate recovery
34 mechanism, authorizing charges in an amount to be determined by

1 the Commission for each line of a subscriber to allow
2 telecommunications carriers providing local exchange service
3 (i) to recover costs as they are incurred under this Section
4 and (ii) to recover the costs of the Accessible Electronic
5 Information Act program, as represented by the percentage
6 determined by the Illinois Commerce Commission under Section
7 20(b) of that Act.

8 (d) The Commission shall determine and specify those
9 organizations serving the needs of those persons having a
10 hearing or speech disability that shall receive a
11 telecommunications device and in which offices the equipment
12 shall be installed in the case of an organization having more
13 than one office. For the purposes of this Section,
14 "organizations serving the needs of those persons with hearing
15 or speech disabilities" means centers for independent living as
16 described in Section 12a of the Disabled Persons Rehabilitation
17 Act and not-for-profit organizations whose primary purpose is
18 serving the needs of those persons with hearing or speech
19 disabilities. The Commission shall direct the
20 telecommunications carriers subject to its jurisdiction and
21 this Section to comply with its determinations and
22 specifications in this regard.

23 (e) As used in this Section, the phrase "telecommunications
24 carrier providing local exchange service" includes, without
25 otherwise limiting the meaning of the term, telecommunications
26 carriers which are purely mutual concerns, having no rates or
27 charges for services, but paying the operating expenses by
28 assessment upon the members of such a company and no other
29 person.

30 (Source: P.A. 88-497.)

31 (220 ILCS 5/13-703.1 new)

32 Sec. 13-703.1. Distribution of accessible information;
33 Illinois State Library.

1 (a) For the purposes of this Section:

2 "Distribution of accessible information" means rapid
3 dissemination of digitized text content, including newspapers,
4 prepared for reproduction in synthetic speech or braille
5 formats provided to persons eligible for service in the State
6 Library's Talking Book Program.

7 "Qualified entity" means a nonprofit organization that (i)
8 produces digitized text editions of daily newspapers,
9 available for interstate distribution in synthetic speech or
10 braille format, using high-speed computer and
11 telecommunications technology, (ii) obtains electronic news
12 text through direct transfer arrangements made with
13 participating news organizations and does not replicate their
14 electronic editions that are otherwise available on the
15 Internet, and (iii) provides a means of program administration
16 and reader registration on the Internet.

17 (b) The Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation, or
18 any other entity designated by the Illinois Commerce Commission
19 to implement a program under Section 13-703 of this Act for the
20 purposes of allowing those with hearing disabilities to use
21 effective telecommunications equipment, shall enter into an
22 agreement with the State Library providing for an annual
23 payment in an amount equal to the cost incurred for the
24 distribution of accessible information. Under the agreement,
25 the State Library shall obtain the service through a qualified
26 entity and provide blind and other persons eligible for its
27 talking book program with access to digitized text editions of
28 daily newspapers and other context of timely value.

29 (c) The State Library shall, in consultation with the
30 qualified entity, specify equipment that may be used by
31 eligible persons who, due to hearing loss, are unable to use
32 effectively standard telecommunications equipment to access
33 the content in the synthetic speech format otherwise provided,
34 and the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation or any

1 subsequent designee of the Illinois Commerce Commission shall
2 acquire such equipment for such individuals under terms similar
3 to those required of individuals to whom the Illinois
4 Telecommunications Access Corporation provides TTY equipment.

5 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon
6 becoming law.".