



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 Illinois Commerce Commission shall determine the
10 percentage of the cost recovery rate established under Section
11 13-703(c) of the Public Utilities Act needed annually to
12 support the program described in Section 15, and each local
13 exchange telecommunications company shall remit to the
14 Director an amount to be computed based on the percentage
15 required, less any amount allowed for administration. 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 adding
26 Section 13-703.1 as follows:

27 (220 ILCS 5/13-703.1 new)

28 Sec. 13-703.1. Distribution of accessible information;
29 Illinois State Library.

30 (a) For the purposes of this Section:

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

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

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

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

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

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