

97TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2355

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 8, 1982

Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

AN ACT

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide that persons with impaired hearing are ensured reasonable access to telephone service.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 That the Congress hereby finds that—

4 (1) all persons subscribing to our otherwise receiv-
5 ing telephone service in the Nation should receive the
6 best service which is technologically and economically
7 feasible;

8 (2) currently available technology is capable of
9 providing telephone service to some of those individuals
10 who, because of hearing impairments, require telephone
11 reception by means of hearing aids with induction coils,
12 or other inductive receptors;

1 “(c) The Commission may establish such technical
2 standards as are required in order to ensure compatibility be-
3 tween telephones and hearing aids.

4 “(d) The Commission shall establish such requirements
5 for the labeling of packaging materials for equipment as are
6 needed to provide adequate information to consumers on the
7 compatibility between telephones and hearing aids.

8 “(e) In any rulemaking to implement the provisions of
9 this section, the Commission shall specifically consider the
10 costs and benefits to all telephone users, including persons
11 with and without hearing impairments. The Commission shall
12 ensure that regulations adopted to implement this section en-
13 courage the use of currently available technology and do not
14 discourage or impair the development of new technology.

15 “(f) The Commission shall complete rulemaking actions
16 required by this section and issue such rules and regulations
17 resulting therefrom within one year after the date of enact-
18 ment of this section of the Act. Thereafter the Commission
19 shall periodically review such rules and regulations. Except
20 for coin-operated public telephones and telephones provided
21 for emergency use, the Commission may not require the re-

1 trofitting of equipment to achieve the purposes of this sec-
2 tion.”.

Passed the Senate August 18 (legislative day,
August 17), 1982.

Attest: WILLIAM F. HILDENBRAND,
Secretary.

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Union Calendar No. 555

97TH CONGRESS
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[Report No. 97-888]

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide that persons with impaired hearing are ensured reasonable access to telephone service.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 8, 1982

Referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

SEPTEMBER 28, 1982

Reported with amendments, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of referred bill, see copy of bill as referred in the House on September 8, 1982]

AN ACT

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide that persons with impaired hearing are ensured reasonable access to telephone service.

- 1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
- 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
- 3 *That this Act may be cited as the "Telecommunications for*
- 4 *the Disabled Act of 1982".*

1 *SEC. 2. The Congress finds that—*

2 *(1) all person should have available the best tele-*
3 *phone service which is technologically and economical-*
4 *ly feasible;*

5 *(2) currently available technology is capable of*
6 *providing telephone service to some individuals who,*
7 *because of hearing impairments, require telephone re-*
8 *ception by means of hearing aids with induction coils,*
9 *or other inductive receptors;*

10 *(3) the lack of technical standards ensuring com-*
11 *patibility between hearing aids and telephones has pre-*
12 *vented receipt of the best telephone service which is*
13 *technologically and economically feasible; and*

14 *(4) adoption of technical standards is required in*
15 *order to ensure compatibility between telephones and*
16 *hearing aids, thereby accommodating the needs of indi-*
17 *viduals with hearing impairments.*

18 *SEC. 3. Title VI of the Communications Act of 1934*
19 *(47 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end*
20 *thereof the following new section:*

21 *“TELEPHONE SERVICE FOR THE DISABLED*

22 *“SEC. 610. (a) The Commission shall establish such*
23 *regulations as are necessary to ensure reasonable access to*
24 *telephone service by persons with impaired hearing.*

1 “(b) The Commission shall require that essential tele-
2 phones provide internal means for effective use with hearing
3 aids that are specially designed for telephone use. For pur-
4 poses of this subsection, the term ‘essential telephones’ means
5 only coin-operated telephones, telephones provided for emer-
6 gency use, and other telephones frequently needed for use by
7 persons using such hearing aids.

8 “(c) The Commission shall establish or approve such
9 technical standards as are required to enforce this section.

10 “(d) The Commission shall establish such requirements
11 for the labeling of packaging materials for equipment as are
12 needed to provide adequate information to consumers on the
13 compatibility between telephones and hearing aids.

14 “(e) In any rulemaking to implement the provisions of
15 this section, the Commission shall specifically consider the
16 costs and benefits to all telephone users, including persons
17 with and without hearing impairments. The Commission
18 shall ensure that regulations adopted to implement this sec-
19 tion encourage the use of currently available technology and
20 do not discourage or impair the development of improved
21 technology.

22 “(f) The Commission shall complete rulemaking actions
23 required by this section and issue specific and detailed rules
24 and regulations resulting therefrom within one year after the
25 date of enactment the Telecommunications for the Disabled

1 *Act of 1982. Thereafter the Commission shall periodically*
2 *review such rules and regulations. Except for coin-operated*
3 *telephones and telephones provided for emergency use, the*
4 *Commission may not require the retrofitting of equipment to*
5 *achieve the purposes of this section.*

6 “(g) *Any common carrier or connecting carrier may*
7 *provide specialized terminal equipment needed by persons*
8 *whose hearing, speech, vision, or mobility is impaired. The*
9 *State commission may allow the carrier to recover in its tar-*
10 *iffs for regulated service reasonable and prudent costs not*
11 *charged directly to users of such equipment.*

12 “(h) *The Commission shall delegate to each State com-*
13 *mission the authority to enforce within such State compli-*
14 *ance with the specific regulations that the Commission issues*
15 *under subsections (a) and (b), conditioned upon the adoption*
16 *and enforcement of such regulations by the State commis-*
17 *sion.”.*

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to provide reasonable access to telephone service for persons with impaired hearing and to enable telephone companies to accommodate persons with other physical disabilities.”.

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