



93RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
State of Illinois
2003 and 2004
SB2498

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

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

220 ILCS 5/13-703.1 new

Amends the Public Utilities Act. Provides that the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation shall enter into an agreement with the State Library providing for an annual payment in an amount equal to the cost incurred for the distribution of accessible information. Provides that the State Library shall specify equipment that may be used by eligible persons who, due to hearing loss, are unable to use effectively standard telecommunications equipment to access the content in the synthetic speech format otherwise provided, and the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation shall acquire such equipment for such individuals under terms similar to those required of individuals to whom the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation provides TTY equipment.

LRB093 19782 AMC 45524 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning utilities.

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

4 Section 5. The Public Utilities Act is amended by adding
5 Section 13-703.1 as follows:

6 (220 ILCS 5/13-703.1 new)

7 Sec. 13-703.1. Distribution of accessible information;
8 Illinois State Library.

9 (a) For the purposes of this Section:

10 "Distribution of accessible information" means rapid
11 dissemination of digitized text content, including newspapers,
12 prepared for reproduction in synthetic speech or braille
13 formats provided to persons eligible for service in the State
14 Library's Talking Book Program.

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

25 (b) The Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation, or
26 any other entity designated by the Illinois Commerce Commission
27 to implement a program under Section 13-703 of this Act for the
28 purposes of allowing those with hearing disabilities to use
29 effective telecommunications equipment, shall enter into an
30 agreement with the State Library providing for an annual
31 payment in an amount equal to the cost incurred for the
32 distribution of accessible information. Under the agreement,

1 the State Library shall obtain the service through a qualified
2 entity and provide blind and other persons eligible for its
3 talking book program with access to digitized text editions of
4 daily newspapers and other context of timely value.

5 (c) The State Library shall, in consultation with the
6 qualified entity, specify equipment that may be used by
7 eligible persons who, due to hearing loss, are unable to use
8 effectively standard telecommunications equipment to access
9 the content in the synthetic speech format otherwise provided,
10 and the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation or any
11 subsequent designee of the Illinois Commerce Commission shall
12 acquire such equipment for such individuals under terms similar
13 to those required of individuals to whom the Illinois
14 Telecommunications Access Corporation provides TTY equipment.