

AN ACT concerning regulation.

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

Section 5. The Public Utilities Act is amended by changing
Section 13-703 as follows:

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

(Section scheduled to be repealed on July 1, 2017)

Sec. 13-703. (a) The Commission shall design and implement a program whereby each telecommunications carrier providing local exchange service shall provide a telecommunications device capable of servicing the needs of those persons with a hearing or speech disability together with a single party line, at no charge additional to the basic exchange rate, to any subscriber who is certified as having a hearing or speech disability by a hearing care professional, as defined in the Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Act ~~licensed physician,~~ speech-language pathologist, ~~audiologist~~ or a qualified State agency and to any subscriber which is an organization serving the needs of those persons with a hearing or speech disability as determined and specified by the Commission pursuant to subsection (d).

(b) The Commission shall design and implement a program, whereby each telecommunications carrier providing local

exchange service shall provide a telecommunications relay system, using third party intervention to connect those persons having a hearing or speech disability with persons of normal hearing by way of intercommunications devices and the telephone system, making available reasonable access to all phases of public telephone service to persons who have a hearing or speech disability. In order to design a telecommunications relay system which will meet the requirements of those persons with a hearing or speech disability available at a reasonable cost, the Commission shall initiate an investigation and conduct public hearings to determine the most cost-effective method of providing telecommunications relay service to those persons who have a hearing or speech disability when using telecommunications devices and therein solicit the advice, counsel, and physical assistance of Statewide nonprofit consumer organizations that serve persons with hearing or speech disabilities in such hearings and during the development and implementation of the system. The Commission shall phase in this program, on a geographical basis, as soon as is practicable, but no later than June 30, 1990.

(c) The Commission shall establish a competitively neutral rate recovery mechanism that establishes charges in an amount to be determined by the Commission for each line of a subscriber to allow telecommunications carriers providing local exchange service to recover costs as they are incurred under this Section. Beginning no later than April 1, 2016, and

on a yearly basis thereafter, the Commission shall initiate a proceeding to establish the competitively neutral amount to be charged or assessed to subscribers of telecommunications carriers and wireless carriers, Interconnected VoIP service providers, and consumers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service in a manner consistent with this subsection (c) and subsection (f) of this Section. The Commission shall issue its order establishing the competitively neutral amount to be charged or assessed to subscribers of telecommunications carriers and wireless carriers, Interconnected VoIP service providers, and purchasers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service on or prior to June 1 of each year, and such amount shall take effect June 1 of each year.

Telecommunications carriers, wireless carriers, Interconnected VoIP service providers, and sellers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service shall have 60 days from the date the Commission files its order to implement the new rate established by the order.

(d) The Commission shall determine and specify those organizations serving the needs of those persons having a hearing or speech disability that shall receive a telecommunications device and in which offices the equipment shall be installed in the case of an organization having more than one office. For the purposes of this Section, "organizations serving the needs of those persons with hearing

or speech disabilities" means centers for independent living as described in Section 12a of the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities Act and not-for-profit organizations whose primary purpose is serving the needs of those persons with hearing or speech disabilities. The Commission shall direct the telecommunications carriers subject to its jurisdiction and this Section to comply with its determinations and specifications in this regard.

(e) As used in this Section:

"Prepaid wireless telecommunications service" has the meaning given to that term under Section 10 of the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act.

"Retail transaction" has the meaning given to that term under Section 10 of the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act.

"Seller" has the meaning given to that term under Section 10 of the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act.

"Telecommunications carrier providing local exchange service" includes, without otherwise limiting the meaning of the term, telecommunications carriers which are purely mutual concerns, having no rates or charges for services, but paying the operating expenses by assessment upon the members of such a company and no other person.

"Wireless carrier" has the meaning given to that term under Section 10 of the Wireless Emergency Telephone Safety Act.

(f) Interconnected VoIP service providers, sellers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service, and wireless

carriers in Illinois shall collect and remit assessments determined in accordance with this Section in a competitively neutral manner in the same manner as a telecommunications carrier providing local exchange service. However, the assessment imposed on consumers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service shall be collected by the seller from the consumer and imposed per retail transaction as a percentage of that retail transaction on all retail transactions occurring in this State. The assessment on subscribers of wireless carriers and consumers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service shall not be imposed or collected prior to June 1, 2016.

Sellers of prepaid wireless telecommunications service shall remit the assessments to the Department of Revenue on the same form and in the same manner which they remit the fee collected under the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act. For the purposes of display on the consumers' receipts, the rates of the fee collected under the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act and the assessment under this Section may be combined. In administration and enforcement of this Section, the provisions of Sections 15 and 20 of the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act (except subsections (a), (a-5), (b-5), (e), and (e-5) of Section 15 and subsections (c) and (e) of Section 20 of the Prepaid Wireless 9-1-1 Surcharge Act and, from June 29, 2015 ~~(the effective date of Public Act 99-6) this amendatory Act of the 99th General Assembly,~~ the seller shall be permitted to

deduct and retain 3% of the assessments that are collected by the seller from consumers and that are remitted and timely filed with the Department) that are not inconsistent with this Section, shall apply, as far as practicable, to the subject matter of this Section to the same extent as if those provisions were included in this Section. The Department shall deposit all assessments and penalties collected under this Section into the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation Fund, a special fund created in the State treasury. On or before the 25th day of each calendar month, the Department shall prepare and certify to the Comptroller the amount available to the Commission for distribution out of the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation Fund. The amount certified shall be the amount (not including credit memoranda) collected during the second preceding calendar month by the Department, plus an amount the Department determines is necessary to offset any amounts which were erroneously paid to a different taxing body or fund. The amount paid to the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation Fund shall not include any amount equal to the amount of refunds made during the second preceding calendar month by the Department to retailers under this Section or any amount that the Department determines is necessary to offset any amounts which were payable to a different taxing body or fund but were erroneously paid to the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation Fund. The Commission shall distribute all the funds

to the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation and the funds may only be used in accordance with the provisions of this Section. The Department shall deduct 2% of all amounts deposited in the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation Fund during every year of remitted assessments. Of the 2% deducted by the Department, one-half shall be transferred into the Tax Compliance and Administration Fund to reimburse the Department for its direct costs of administering the collection and remittance of the assessment. The remaining one-half shall be transferred into the Public Utilities Fund to reimburse the Commission for its costs of distributing to the Illinois Telecommunications Access Corporation the amount certified by the Department for distribution. The amount to be charged or assessed under subsections (c) and (f) is not imposed on a provider or the consumer for wireless Lifeline service where the consumer does not pay the provider for the service. Where the consumer purchases from the provider optional minutes, texts, or other services in addition to the federally funded Lifeline benefit, a consumer must pay the charge or assessment, and it must be collected by the seller according to subsection (f).

Interconnected VoIP services shall not be considered an intrastate telecommunications service for the purposes of this Section in a manner inconsistent with federal law or Federal Communications Commission regulation.

(g) The provisions of this Section are severable under

Section 1.31 of the Statute on Statutes.

(h) The Commission may adopt rules necessary to implement this Section.

(Source: P.A. 99-6, eff. 6-29-15; 99-143, eff. 7-27-15; revised 10-21-15.)

Section 10. The Hearing Instrument Consumer Protection Act is amended by changing Section 8 as follows:

(225 ILCS 50/8) (from Ch. 111, par. 7408)

(Section scheduled to be repealed on January 1, 2026)

Sec. 8. Applicant qualifications; examination.

(a) In order to protect persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, the Department shall authorize or shall conduct an appropriate examination, which may be the International Hearing Society's licensure examination, for persons who dispense, test, select, recommend, fit, or service hearing instruments. The frequency of holding these examinations shall be determined by the Department by rule. Those who successfully pass such an examination shall be issued a license as a hearing instrument dispenser, which shall be effective for a 2-year period.

(b) Applicants shall be:

- (1) at least 18 years of age;
- (2) of good moral character;
- (3) the holder of an associate's degree or the

equivalent;

(4) free of contagious or infectious disease; and

(5) a citizen or person who has the status as a legal alien.

Felony convictions of the applicant and findings against the applicant involving matters set forth in Sections 17 and 18 shall be considered in determining moral character, but such a conviction or finding shall not make an applicant ineligible to register for examination.

(c) Prior to engaging in the practice of fitting, dispensing, or servicing hearing instruments, an applicant shall demonstrate, by means of written and practical examinations, that such person is qualified to practice the testing, selecting, recommending, fitting, selling, or servicing of hearing instruments as defined in this Act. An applicant must obtain a license within 12 months after passing either the written or practical examination, whichever is passed first, or must take and pass those examinations again in order to be eligible to receive a license.

The Department shall, by rule, determine the conditions under which an individual is examined.

(d) Proof of having met the minimum requirements of continuing education as determined by the Board shall be required of all license renewals. Pursuant to rule, the continuing education requirements may, upon petition to the Board, be waived in whole or in part if the hearing instrument

dispenser can demonstrate that he or she served in the Coast Guard or Armed Forces, had an extreme hardship, or obtained his or her license by examination or endorsement within the preceding renewal period.

(e) Persons applying for an initial license must demonstrate having earned, at a minimum, an associate degree or its equivalent from an accredited institution of higher education that is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or that meets the U.S. Department of Education equivalency as determined through a National Association of Credential Evaluation Services (NACES) member, and meet the other requirements of this Section. In addition, the applicant must demonstrate the successful completion of (1) 12 semester hours or 18 quarter hours of academic undergraduate course work in an accredited institution consisting of 3 semester hours of anatomy and physiology of the ~~speech and~~ hearing mechanism, 3 semester hours of hearing science, 3 semester hours of introduction to audiology, and 3 semester hours of aural rehabilitation, or the quarter hour equivalent or (2) an equivalent program as determined by the Department that is consistent with the scope of practice of a hearing instrument dispenser as defined in Section 3 of this Act. Persons licensed before January 1, 2003 who have a valid license on that date may have their license renewed without meeting the requirements of this subsection.

(Source: P.A. 98-827, eff. 1-1-15; 99-204, eff. 7-30-15.)

Public Act 099-0847

SB0462 Enrolled

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