

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 2512

To provide grants for training court reporters and closed captioners to meet requirements for realtime writers under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 14 (legislative day, MAY 9), 2002

Mr. HARKIN (for himself, Mr. GRASSLEY, Mr. BINGAMAN, Mr. COCHRAN, Mr. DODD, Mr. HELMS, Mr. KERRY, Mr. ROCKEFELLER, Mr. REID, Mr. SMITH of Oregon, and Mr. WELLSTONE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To provide grants for training court reporters and closed captioners to meet requirements for realtime writers under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

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

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Training for Realtime
5 Writers Act of 2002”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) As directed by Congress in section 723 of
2 the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 613),
3 as added by section 305 of the Telecommunications
4 Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–104; 110 Stat. 126),
5 the Federal Communications Commission adopted
6 rules requiring closed captioning of most television
7 programming, which gradually require new video
8 programming to be fully captioned beginning in
9 2006.

10 (2) More than 28,000,000 Americans, or 8 per-
11 cent of the population, are considered deaf or hard
12 of hearing and many require captioning services to
13 participate in mainstream activities.

14 (3) More than 24,000 children are born in the
15 United States each year with some form of hearing
16 loss.

17 (4) According to the United States Department
18 of Health and Human Services and a study done by
19 the National Council on Aging—

20 (A) 25 percent of Americans over 65 years
21 old are hearing impaired;

22 (B) 33 percent of Americans over 70 years
23 old are hearing impaired; and

24 (C) 41 percent of Americans over 75 years
25 old are hearing impaired.

1 (5) The National Council on Aging study also
2 found that depression in older adults may be directly
3 related to hearing loss and disconnection with the
4 spoken word.

5 (6) Over the past 5 years, student enrollment in
6 programs that train court reporters to become
7 realtime writers has decreased significantly, causing
8 such programs to close on many campuses.

9 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT PROGRAM TO PRO-**
10 **MOTE TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT OF**
11 **REALTIME WRITERS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The National Telecommuni-
13 cations and Information Administration shall make grants
14 to not more than 20 eligible entities under subsection (b)
15 to promote training and placement of individuals, includ-
16 ing individuals who have completed a court reporting
17 training program, as realtime writers in order to meet the
18 requirements for closed captioning of video programming
19 set forth in section 723 of the Communications Act of
20 1934 (47 U.S.C. 613) and the rules prescribed there-
21 under.

22 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—For purposes of this Act,
23 an eligible entity is a court reporting program that is—

24 (1) approved by the National Court Reporters
25 Association;

1 (2) accredited by an accrediting agency recog-
2 nized by the Department of Education; and

3 (3) participating in student aid programs under
4 title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965.

5 (c) DURATION OF GRANT.—A grant under this sec-
6 tion shall be for a period of two years.

7 (d) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of
8 a grant provided under subsection (a) to an entity eligible
9 may not exceed \$1,000,000 for the two-year period of the
10 grant under subsection (c).

11 **SEC. 4. APPLICATION.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—To receive a grant under section
13 3, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Na-
14 tional Telecommunications and Information Administra-
15 tion at such time and in such manner as the Administra-
16 tion may require. The application shall contain the infor-
17 mation set forth under subsection (b).

18 (b) INFORMATION.—Information in the application of
19 an eligible entity under subsection (a) for a grant under
20 section 3 shall include the following:

21 (1) A description of the training and assistance
22 to be funded using the grant amount, including how
23 such training and assistance will increase the num-
24 ber of realtime writers.

1 (2) A description of performance measures to
2 be utilized to evaluate the progress of individuals re-
3 ceiving such training and assistance in matters relat-
4 ing to enrollment, completion of training, and job
5 placement and retention.

6 (3) A description of the manner in which the el-
7 igible entity will ensure that recipients of scholar-
8 ships, if any, funded by the grant will be employed
9 and retained as realtime writers.

10 (4) A description of the manner in which the el-
11 igible entity intends to continue providing the train-
12 ing and assistance to be funded by the grant after
13 the end of the grant period, including any partner-
14 ships or arrangements established for that purpose.

15 (5) A description of how the eligible entity will
16 work with local workforce investment boards to en-
17 sure that training and assistance to be funded with
18 the grant will further local workforce goals, includ-
19 ing the creation of educational opportunities for in-
20 dividuals who are from economically disadvantaged
21 backgrounds or are displaced workers.

22 (6) Such other information as the Administra-
23 tion may require.

1 **SEC. 5. USE OF FUNDS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity receiving a
3 grant under section 3 shall use the grant amount for pur-
4 poses relating to the recruitment, training and assistance,
5 and job placement of individuals, including individuals
6 who have completed a court reporting training program,
7 as realtime writers, including—

8 (1) recruitment;

9 (2) subject to subsection (b), the provision of
10 scholarships;

11 (3) distance learning;

12 (4) education and training;

13 (5) job placement assistance;

14 (6) encouragement of individuals with disabil-
15 ities to pursue a career in realtime writing; and

16 (7) the employment and payment of personnel
17 for such purposes.

18 (b) SCHOLARSHIPS.—

19 (1) AMOUNT.—The amount of a scholarship
20 under subsection (a)(2) shall be based on the
21 amount of need of the recipient of the scholarship
22 for financial assistance, as determined in accordance
23 with part F of title IV of the Higher Education Act
24 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087kk).

25 (2) AGREEMENT.—Each recipient of a scholar-
26 ship under subsection (a)(2) shall enter into an

1 agreement with the National Telecommunications
2 and Information Administration to provide realtime
3 writing services for a period of time (as determined
4 by the Administration) that is appropriate (as so de-
5 termined) for the amount of the scholarship re-
6 ceived.

7 (3) COURSEWORK AND EMPLOYMENT.—The
8 Administration shall establish requirements for
9 coursework and employment for recipients of schol-
10 arships under subsection (a)(2), including require-
11 ments for repayment of scholarship amounts in the
12 event of failure to meet such requirements for
13 coursework and employment. Requirements for re-
14 payment of scholarship amounts shall take into ac-
15 count the effect of economic conditions on the capac-
16 ity of scholarship recipients to find work as realtime
17 writers.

18 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The recipient of a
19 grant under section 3 may not use more than 5 percent
20 of the grant amount to pay administrative costs associated
21 with activities funded by the grant.

22 (d) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Grants amounts
23 under this Act shall supplement and not supplant other
24 Federal or non-Federal funds of the grant recipient for

1 purposes of promoting the training and placement of indi-
2 viduals as realtime writers

3 **SEC. 6. REPORTS.**

4 (a) ANNUAL REPORTS.—Each eligible entity receiv-
5 ing a grant under section 3 shall submit to the National
6 Telecommunications and Information Administration, at
7 the end of each year of the grant period, a report on the
8 activities of such entity with respect to the use of grant
9 amounts during such year.

10 (b) REPORT INFORMATION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each report of an entity for
12 a year under subsection (a) shall include a descrip-
13 tion of the use of grant amounts by the entity dur-
14 ing such year, including an assessment by the entity
15 of the effectiveness of activities carried out using
16 such funds in increasing the number of realtime
17 writers. The assessment shall utilize the performance
18 measures submitted by the entity in the application
19 for the grant under section 4(b).

20 (2) FINAL REPORT.—The final report of an en-
21 tity on a grant under subsection (a) shall include a
22 description of the best practices identified by the en-
23 tity as a result of the grant for increasing the num-
24 ber of individuals who are trained, employed, and re-
25 tained in employment as realtime writers.

1 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
3 this Act, amounts as follows:

4 (1) \$15,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2003,
5 2004, and 2005.

6 (2) Such sums as may be necessary for each of
7 fiscal years 2006 and 2007.

○