
SENATE BILL 5486

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senators Orwall, Dhingra, Nobles, and Trudeau

Read first time 01/24/25. Referred to Committee on Law & Justice.

1 AN ACT Relating to open motion picture captioning in motion
2 picture theaters; adding a new section to chapter 49.60 RCW;
3 prescribing penalties; and providing an effective date.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 49.60
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1) A place of public accommodation that is a motion picture
8 theater shall provide access to fully operational and well-maintained
9 closed motion picture captioning technology for the general public
10 for each screening of a motion picture that is produced and available
11 with closed motion picture captioning as required by Title III of the
12 federal Americans with disabilities act.

13 (2) A place of public accommodation that controls, operates,
14 owns, or leases a motion picture theater with six or more screens in
15 the state shall, for each motion picture it screens that is produced
16 and available with open captioning, provide open captioning for at
17 least two screenings of the motion picture within each of the first
18 two weeks of the motion picture's release.

19 (a) At least one open-captioned screening must take place during
20 peak weekend hours. For purposes of this subsection (2)(a), "peak

1 weekend hours" means between 5:59 p.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Fridays or
2 between 10:59 a.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Saturdays or Sundays.

3 (b) After the first two weeks of a motion picture's release, at
4 least one weekly screening must be open-captioned and screened during
5 peak hours. For purposes of this subsection (2)(b), "peak hours"
6 means between 5:59 p.m. and 10:01 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays,
7 Wednesdays, or Thursdays; between 5:59 p.m. and 11:01 p.m. on
8 Fridays; or between 10:59 a.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Saturdays or
9 Sundays.

10 (3) A motion picture theater with five or fewer screens must:

11 (a) Provide an open-captioned screening within 72 hours after
12 receiving a request; or

13 (b) Offer open captioning consistent with the requirements for
14 theaters with six or more screens.

15 (4) Motion picture theaters shall provide contact information on
16 their websites for the purposes of fulfilling requests for open-
17 captioned screenings.

18 (5) A screening of a motion picture with open captioning that
19 overlaps with another screening of a motion picture with open
20 captioning may not be counted toward the minimum number of screenings
21 required by this section, except where it is not practicable to avoid
22 such overlap.

23 (6) A motion picture theater shall advertise the date and time of
24 open-captioned screenings required by this section in the same manner
25 as the motion picture theater advertises all other motion picture
26 screenings and indicate which screenings will include open
27 captioning.

28 (7) A motion picture theater shall maintain documents sufficient
29 to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this section for a
30 period of at least one year.

31 (8) A motion picture theater that fails to comply with the
32 requirements of this section is subject to a civil fine of up to \$100
33 for each violation. Written notice of the violation must be provided
34 to the motion picture theater and must state that the fine will be
35 assessed. The notice must also state that the motion picture theater
36 may cure the violation by complying with the requirement within 30
37 days after delivery of the notice. If the motion picture theater
38 demonstrates compliance within the 30-day period, the fine may not be
39 assessed and the violation must be dismissed. Any subsequent
40 violation results in a civil fine of up to \$500.

1 (9) The human rights commission must prepare an educational
2 pamphlet advising motion picture theaters of their duty and liability
3 under this section. The pamphlet must clarify the differences between
4 closed captioning and open captioning and how motion picture theaters
5 should advertise open-captioned screenings. The pamphlet should be
6 made available online.

7 (10) For purposes of this section:

8 (a) "Closed captioning" means a transcript or dialogue of the
9 audio portion of a motion picture that is displayed on either the
10 bottom or top portion of a motion picture screen.

11 (b) "Motion picture theater" means an establishment in which
12 feature motion pictures are regularly exhibited to the public for an
13 admission charge.

14 (c) "Open captioning" means the written, on-screen display of a
15 motion picture's dialogue and nonspeech information, which may
16 include music, the identity of the character speaking, or other
17 sounds and sound effects.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** This act takes effect January 1, 2026.

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