

2 SSB 6377 - H COMM AMD  
3 By Committee on Energy & Utilities

4 ADOPTED AS AMENDED 3/5/92

5 Strike everything after the enacting clause and insert the  
6 following:

7 "NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. The legislature finds that the state of  
8 Washington has shown national leadership in providing  
9 telecommunications access for the hearing impaired and speech impaired  
10 communities. The legislature further finds that the federal Americans  
11 with Disabilities Act requires states to further enhance  
12 telecommunications access for disabled persons and that the state  
13 should be positioned to allow this service to be delivered with  
14 fairness, flexibility, and efficiency."

15 "Sec. 2. RCW 43.20A.720 and 1990 c 89 s 2 are each amended to read  
16 as follows:

17 "Hearing impaired" means those persons who are certified to be  
18 deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing, and those persons who are  
19 certified to have a hearing disability limiting their access to  
20 telecommunications.

21 "Speech impaired" means persons who are certified to be unable to  
22 speak or who are certified to have a speech impairment limiting their  
23 access to telecommunications.

24 "Text telephone (TT)," formerly known as a telecommunications  
25 device for the deaf (TDD)((~~TT~~)) means a ((~~teletypewriter~~))  
26 telecommunications device that has a typewriter or computer keyboard  
27 and a readable display that couples with the telephone, allowing

1 messages to be typed rather than spoken. The device allows a person to  
2 make a telephone call directly to another person possessing similar  
3 equipment. The conversation is typed through one machine to the other  
4 machine instead of spoken.

5 "~~((TDD))~~ Telecommunications relay (~~((system))~~) service (TRS)" is a  
6 service for hearing and speech impaired people who have a ~~((TDD))~~ TT to  
7 call someone who does not have a ~~((TDD))~~ TT or vice versa. The service  
8 consists of several telephones being utilized by ~~((TDD-relay-service~~  
9 ~~operators))~~ TRS communications assistants who receive either ~~((TDD))~~ TT  
10 or voice phone calls. If a ~~((TDD-relay-service-operator))~~ TRS  
11 communications assistant receives a phone call from a hearing or speech  
12 impaired person wishing to call a hearing person, the operator will  
13 call the hearing person and act as an intermediary by translating what  
14 is displayed on the ~~((TDD))~~ TT to voice and typing what is voiced into  
15 the ~~((TDD))~~ TT to be read by the hearing or speech impaired caller.  
16 This process can also be reversed with a hearing person calling a deaf  
17 person through the ~~((TDD))~~ telecommunications relay service. "TRS  
18 program" as used in this chapter includes both the relay function and  
19 TTs.

20 "Qualified trainer" is a person who is knowledgeable about ~~((TDDs))~~  
21 TTs, signal devices, and amplifying accessories; familiar with the  
22 technical aspects of equipment designed to meet hearing impaired  
23 people's needs; and is fluent in American sign language.

24 "Qualified contractor" shall have ~~((bilingual))~~ staff bilingual in  
25 American sign language and standard English available for quality  
26 language/cultural interpretations; quality training of operators; and  
27 policies, training, and operational procedures to be determined by the  
28 office.

29 "The department" means the department of social and health services  
30 of the state of Washington.

1 "Office" means the office of deaf services within the state  
2 department of social and health services."

3 "Sec. 3. RCW 43.20A.725 and 1990 c 89 s 3 are each amended to read  
4 as follows:

5 (1) The department shall maintain a program whereby ((TDDs)) TTs,  
6 signal devices, a ((TDD-relay-system)) TRS, and amplifying accessories  
7 capable of serving the needs of the hearing and speech impaired shall  
8 be provided at no charge additional to the basic exchange rate, to an  
9 individual of school age or older, (a) who is certified as hearing  
10 impaired by a licensed physician, audiologist, or a qualified state  
11 agency, and to any subscriber that is an organization representing the  
12 hearing impaired, as determined and specified by the ((TDD)) TRS  
13 program advisory committee; or (b) who is certified as speech impaired  
14 by a licensed physician, speech pathologist, or a qualified state  
15 agency, and to any subscriber that is an organization representing the  
16 speech impaired, as determined and specified by the ((TDD)) TRS program  
17 advisory committee. For the purpose of this section, certification  
18 implies that individuals cannot use the telephone for expressive or  
19 receptive communications due to hearing or speech impairment.

20 (2) The office shall award contracts on a competitive basis, to  
21 qualified persons for which eligibility to contract is determined by  
22 the office, for the distribution and maintenance of such ((TDDs)) TTs,  
23 signal devices, and amplifying accessories as shall be determined by  
24 the office. When awarding such contracts, the office may consider the  
25 quality of equipment and, with the director's approval, may award  
26 contracts on a basis other than cost. Such contracts ((shall)) may  
27 include a provision for the employment and use of a qualified trainer  
28 and the training of recipients in the use of such devices.

1       (3) The office shall establish and implement a policy for the  
2 ultimate responsibility for recovery of (~~TDDs~~) TTs, signal devices,  
3 and amplifying accessories from recipients who are moving from this  
4 state or who for other reasons are no longer using them.

5       (4) Pursuant to recommendations of the (~~TDD~~) TRS program advisory  
6 committee, until July 26, 1993, the office shall maintain a program  
7 whereby a relay system will be provided state-wide using operator  
8 intervention to connect hearing impaired and speech impaired persons  
9 and offices or organizations representing the hearing impaired and  
10 speech impaired, as determined and specified by the TDD advisory  
11 committee pursuant to RCW 43.20A.730. The relay system shall be the  
12 most cost-effective possible and shall operate in a manner consistent  
13 with federal requirements for such systems.

14       (5) Pursuant to the recommendations of the TDD task force report of  
15 December 1991, and with the express purpose of maintaining state  
16 control and jurisdiction, the office shall seek certification by the  
17 federal communications commission of the state-wide relay service.

18       (6) The office shall award contracts for the operation and  
19 maintenance of the state-wide relay service. The initial contract  
20 shall be for service commencing July 26, 1993. The contract shall be  
21 awarded to an individual company registered as a telecommunications  
22 company by the utilities and transportation commission, to a group of  
23 registered telecommunications companies, or to any other company or  
24 organization determined by the office as qualified to provide relay  
25 services, contingent upon that company or organization being approved  
26 as a registered telecommunications company prior to final contract  
27 approval.

28       (7) The program shall be funded by a telecommunications (~~devices~~  
29 ~~for the deaf (TDD))~~ relay service (TRS) excise tax applied to each  
30 switched access line provided by the local exchange companies. The

1 office shall determine, in consultation with the ((TDD)) TRS program  
2 advisory committee, the amount of money needed to fund the program on  
3 an annual basis, including both operational costs and a reasonable  
4 amount for capital improvements such as equipment upgrade and  
5 replacement. That information shall be given by the department in an  
6 annual budget to the utilities and transportation commission no later  
7 than March 1 prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. The utilities  
8 and transportation commission shall then determine the amount of  
9 ((TDD)) TRS excise tax to be placed on each access line and shall  
10 inform each local exchange company of this amount no later than May 15.  
11 The utilities and transportation commission shall determine the amount  
12 of TRS excise tax by dividing the total of the program budget, as  
13 submitted by the office, by the total number of access lines, and shall  
14 not exercise any further oversight of the program under this  
15 subsection. The ((TDD)) TRS excise tax shall not exceed ten cents per  
16 month per access line. Each local exchange company shall impose the  
17 amount of excise tax determined by the commission as of July 1, and  
18 shall remit the amount collected directly to the department on a  
19 monthly basis. The ((TDD)) TRS excise tax shall be separately  
20 identified on each ratepayer's bill ((as "~~Telecommunications devices~~  
21 ~~funds for deaf and hearing impaired~~"). All proceeds from the ((TDD))  
22 TRS excise tax shall be put into a fund to be administered by the  
23 office through the department.

24 ((+6)) (8) The office shall administer and control the award of  
25 money to all parties incurring costs in implementing and maintaining  
26 telecommunications services, programs, equipment, and technical support  
27 services in accordance with the provisions of RCW 43.20A.725.

28 ((+7)) (9) The department shall provide the legislature with a  
29 biennial report on the operation of the program. The first report  
30 shall be provided no later than December 1, 1990, and successive

1 reports every two years thereafter. Reports shall be prepared in  
2 consultation with the ((TDD)) TRS program advisory committee and the  
3 utilities and transportation commission. The reports shall, at a  
4 minimum, briefly outline the accomplishments of the program, the number  
5 of persons served, revenues and expenditures, the prioritizing of  
6 services to those eligible based on such factors as degree of physical  
7 handicap or the allocation of the program's revenue between provision  
8 of devices to individuals and operation of the state-wide relay  
9 service, other major policy or operational issues, and proposals for  
10 improvements or changes for the program. The first report shall  
11 contain a study which includes examination of like programs in other  
12 states, alternative methods of financing the program, alternative  
13 methods of using the telecommunications system, advantages and  
14 disadvantages of operating the ((TDD)) TRS program from within the  
15 department, by telecommunications companies, and by a private,  
16 nonprofit corporation, and means to limit demand for system usage.

17 ((+8)) (10) The program shall be consistent with the requirements  
18 of federal law for the operation of both interstate and intrastate  
19 telecommunications services for the deaf or hearing impaired or speech  
20 impaired. The department and the utilities and transportation  
21 commission shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with federal  
22 requirements and shall provide timely notice to the legislature of any  
23 legislation that may be required to accomplish compliance."

24 "Sec. 4. RCW 43.20A.730 and 1990 c 89 s 4 are each amended to read  
25 as follows:

26 (1) The department advisory committee on deafness shall establish  
27 a ((TDD)) TRS program advisory committee to oversee operation of the  
28 ((TDD)) TRS program. The ((TDD)) TRS program advisory committee shall  
29 consist of no more than thirteen individuals representing the hearing

1 impaired and speech impaired communities, the department, the utilities  
2 and transportation commission, agencies and services serving the  
3 hearing impaired and speech impaired, and local exchange companies in  
4 the state. The membership on the ((TDD)) TRS program advisory  
5 committee shall, to the maximum extent possible, include  
6 representatives from (a) the major state-wide organizations  
7 representing the hearing impaired and speech impaired, (b)  
8 organizations for the hearing impaired and speech impaired located in  
9 areas of the state with high populations of such persons, and (c)  
10 organizations that reflect the different geographic regions of the  
11 state. In order to develop, implement, and maintain a state-wide relay  
12 system providing cost-effective relay centers at a reasonable cost and  
13 that will meet the requirements of the hearing impaired and speech  
14 impaired, the ((TDD)) TRS program advisory committee shall investigate  
15 options, conduct public hearings as needed to ((determine)) develop  
16 recommendations on the most cost-effective method of operating a state-  
17 wide relay system providing relay centers to the hearing impaired and  
18 speech impaired, and solicit the advice, counsel, and assistance of  
19 interested parties and nonprofit consumer organizations for hearing  
20 impaired and speech impaired persons state-wide. The ((TDD)) TRS  
21 program advisory committee shall also, in conjunction with the  
22 department, monitor the activities and moneys that are being spent by  
23 the department for the program herein.

24 (2) The TRS program advisory committee shall provide reports at  
25 least four times per year to the administrators and operators of the  
26 TRS state-wide relay service. The committee shall report on the extent  
27 to which the relay system is meeting the needs of disabled citizens in  
28 the state, and shall include program elements that are successful,  
29 program elements in need of improvement, and any recommendations from  
30 the committee.

1       (3) The ((FDD)) TRS program advisory committee shall establish  
2 criteria and specify state-wide organizations representing the hearing  
3 or speech impaired meeting such criteria that are to receive  
4 telecommunications devices pursuant to RCW 43.20A.725(1), and in which  
5 offices the equipment shall be installed if an organization has more  
6 than one office."

7       "NEW SECTION. Sec. 5. A new section is added to chapter 80.36 RCW  
8 to read as follows:

9       Each telecommunications company providing intrastate interexchange  
10 voice transmission service shall offer discounts from otherwise  
11 applicable long distance rates for service used in conjunction with the  
12 state-wide relay service authorized under RCW 43.20A.725. Such long  
13 distance discounts shall be determined in relation to the additional  
14 time required to translate calls through relay operators. In the case  
15 of intrastate long distance services provided pursuant to tariff, the  
16 commission shall require the incorporation of such discounts."

17       "NEW SECTION. Sec. 6. If any provision of this act or its  
18 application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the  
19 remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other  
20 persons or circumstances is not affected."

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22 By Committee on Energy & Utilities

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24       On page 1, line 1 of the title, after "system;" strike the  
25 remainder of the title and insert "amending RCW 43.20A.720, 43.20A.725,  
26 and 43.20A.730; adding a new section to chapter 80.36 RCW; and creating  
27 a new section."