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SENATE BILL 6862

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State of Washington

56th Legislature

2000 Regular Session

By Senator Thibaudeau

Read first time 03/07/2000. Referred to Committee on Health & Long-Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to assistive technology; and adding a new chapter  
2 to Title 74 RCW.

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

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that providing  
5 meaningful access to appropriate assistive technology for senior  
6 citizens and children and adults with disabilities is a matter of  
7 public interest. Access to such technology can play a vital role in  
8 maximizing individual potential. Investments in assistive technology  
9 also are cost-effective because they reduce the risk of secondary  
10 injuries, make it possible for people to live at home rather than in  
11 long-term care, and provide a foundation for success in education and  
12 employment, thereby reducing the high levels of unemployment  
13 experienced by people with disabilities. The legislature further finds  
14 that current public and private funding sources are inadequate, or not  
15 suited to meet the assistive technology needs of many sectors of the  
16 population, or both, and that it is necessary for the state to  
17 establish a program that will facilitate the development of alternative  
18 financing arrangements to help individuals with disabilities acquire

1 the assistive technology they need for education, employment, health  
2 care, independent living, transportation, and recreation.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply  
4 throughout this chapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise.

5 (1) "Assistive technology" means any item, piece of equipment, or  
6 device that enables an individual with a disability to improve his or  
7 her functional capabilities, independence, or quality of life, and any  
8 service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the  
9 selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

10 (2) "Fund" means the Washington assistive technology access fund.

11 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** The Washington assistive technology access  
12 fund is hereby established. The fund shall consist of such moneys as  
13 may be appropriated by the legislature, gifts, bequests, endowments, or  
14 grants from the United States government, its agencies, and  
15 instrumentalities, receipts by the fund associated with loans made by  
16 it, all income from the investment of moneys held in the fund, and any  
17 other available source of funds, public or private. Unexpended moneys  
18 contained in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall be carried  
19 forward from year to year. Interest and income earned from the  
20 investment of such funds shall remain in the fund and be credited to  
21 it.

22 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The fund shall be administered by the state  
23 treasurer. Programs and activities sponsored through the fund shall be  
24 administered by the Washington assistive technology alliance within the  
25 division of vocational rehabilitation. The Washington assistive  
26 technology alliance is authorized and directed to solicit matching  
27 federal and private sector dollars, to contract with other public and  
28 private entities, to establish policies and regulations concerning  
29 program eligibility and procedures, and to undertake all other  
30 activities necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

31 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** (1) The fund may be used for the following  
32 purposes:

33 (a) The creation of a loan guarantee and interest buy-down program  
34 to assist qualified borrowers in financing purchases of assistive

1 technology devices and services through loans from private lending  
2 institutions; and

3 (b) Resources permitting, the creation of other alternative  
4 assistive technology financing arrangements including, without  
5 limitation, grant programs for low-income individuals and families who  
6 do not qualify for loans or other public and private sources of  
7 assistive technology funding and assistive technology equipment loan  
8 programs to serve individuals who need access to such equipment on a  
9 short-term basis, and whose needs cannot be met through other means.

10 (2) Income from the fund also may be used for related support and  
11 administrative activities including, without limitation, program  
12 development and administration, assistance to individuals in  
13 identifying and applying for private bank loans and other public  
14 assistive technology funding sources such as vocational rehabilitation,  
15 public education, private insurance, medicaid, and medicare, and public  
16 and private sector fund development activities.

17 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** (1) The director of the division of  
18 vocational rehabilitation shall appoint an assistive technology access  
19 fund committee, to be composed of at least seven members as follows:

20 (a) One or more representatives of the banking industry experienced  
21 with consumer lending;

22 (b) One or more professionals with assistive technology expertise;

23 (c) An individual familiar with consumer credit counseling; and

24 (d) Four public members with a knowledge of assistive technology  
25 representing a range of disabilities.

26 (2) Members of the assistive technology access fund committee shall  
27 serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for actual expenses as  
28 provided in RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060. The director of the  
29 Washington assistive technology alliance, or the director's designee,  
30 shall serve as an ex officio member of the assistive technology access  
31 fund committee.

32 (3) The assistive technology access fund committee shall:

33 (a) Advise the Washington assistive technology alliance on the  
34 development and implementation of alternative assistive technology  
35 financing programs under this chapter; and

36 (b) Make annual reports and recommendations to the legislature on  
37 the operation of programs established under this chapter.

1        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 7.**    This chapter may be known and cited as the  
2 Washington assistive technology access act.

3        NEW SECTION.    **Sec. 8.**    Sections 1 through 7 of this act constitute  
4 a new chapter in Title 74 RCW.

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