
ENGROSSED SUBSTITUTE SENATE BILL 5486

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Senate Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Orwall, Dhingra, Nobles, and Trudeau)

READ FIRST TIME 02/07/25.

1 AN ACT Relating to motion picture captioning in motion picture
2 theaters; adding a new section to chapter 49.60 RCW; and providing an
3 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 captioning technology for the general public for each
10 screening of a motion picture that is produced and available with
11 closed captioning as required by Title III of the federal Americans
12 with disabilities act.

13 (2) If a motion picture is produced with open captioning content
14 and distributed to motion picture theaters, a motion picture theater
15 company that controls, operates, owns, or leases five or more motion
16 picture theaters in the state shall provide open captioning
17 screenings of such motion picture that has at least five scheduled
18 screenings at that theater, provided that the theater has digital
19 projection systems that support open captioning files. Such open
20 captioning screenings must occur within each of the time periods set
21 forth below:

1 (a) Within each of the first two weeks of such a motion picture's
2 release, the motion picture theater shall provide at least two open
3 captioning screenings, of which at least one must begin between 5:59
4 p.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Fridays or between 10:59 a.m. and 11:01 p.m.
5 on Saturdays or Sundays.

6 (b) Within each week after the first two weeks of such a motion
7 picture's release, the motion picture theater shall provide at least
8 one open captioning screening per week, which must begin between 5:59
9 p.m. and 10:01 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays;
10 between 5:59 p.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Fridays; or between 10:59 a.m.
11 and 11:01 p.m. on Saturdays or Sundays.

12 (3) If a motion picture is produced with open captioning content
13 and distributed to motion picture theaters, a motion picture theater
14 company that controls, operates, owns, or leases four or fewer motion
15 picture theaters in the state shall, at each theater that has digital
16 projection systems that support open captioning files:

17 (a) Provide an open captioning screening within five calendar
18 days after receiving a request; or

19 (b) Offer open captioning consistent with the requirements for
20 motion picture theaters in subsection (2) of this section.

21 (4) Nothing in this section shall prevent a motion picture
22 theater from offering more open captioning screenings than required
23 by subsections (2) and (3) of this section.

24 (5) Motion picture theaters shall provide contact information on
25 their websites for the purpose of receiving and fulfilling requests
26 for open captioning screenings.

27 (6) If an open captioning screening of a motion picture overlaps
28 with one or more other open captioning screenings of the same motion
29 picture at the same motion picture theater, no more than one such
30 motion picture screening may be counted toward the minimum number of
31 screenings required by this section, except where it is not
32 practicable to avoid such overlap.

33 (7) A motion picture theater shall advertise the date and time of
34 open captioning screenings in the same manner as the motion picture
35 theater advertises all other motion picture screenings and indicate
36 which screenings will include open captioning by using the character
37 symbol "OC."

38 (8) A motion picture theater shall maintain documents sufficient
39 to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this section for a
40 period of at least one year.

1 (9) This section does not apply to drive-in theaters.

2 (10) For purposes of this section:

3 (a) "Closed captioning" means the written display of a movie's
4 dialogue or transcript and may include nonspeech information such as
5 music, character identities, and other sounds or sound effects by
6 means of a personal captioning device that delivers captions to
7 individual patrons.

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

11 (c) "Motion picture theater company" means any individual or
12 business entity that operates one or more motion picture theaters.

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

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

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