

Public Law 100-542
100th Congress

An Act

To expand our national telecommunications system for the benefit of the hearing-impaired and speech-impaired populations, and for other purposes.

Oct. 28, 1988
[H.R. 4992]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

Telecommunications
Accessibility
Enhancement
Act of 1988.
40 USC 762 note.

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Telecommunications Accessibility Enhancement Act of 1988".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

40 USC 762.

As used in this Act—

(1) The term "TDD" means a Telecommunications Device for the Deaf, a machine which employs graphic communications in the transmission of coded signals through the nationwide telecommunications system.

(2) The term "Federal agency" has the meaning given such term by section 3(b) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949 (40 U.S.C. 472(b)).

SEC. 3. FEDERAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS.

40 USC 762a.

(a) ACCESSIBILITY OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS.—The Administrator of General Services, after consultation with the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, the Interagency Committee on Computer Support of Handicapped Employees, the Federal Communications Commission, and affected Federal agencies, shall, by regulation, take such actions in accordance with this section as may be necessary to assure that the Federal telecommunications system is fully accessible to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals, including Federal employees, for communications with and within Federal agencies.

Regulations.

(b) SPECIFIC REQUIREMENT.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Administrator shall—

(1) provide for the continuation of the existing Federal relay system for users of TDD's;

(2) within 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, expand such relay system by employing at least one additional operator;

(3) within 180 days after such date of enactment—

(A) conduct, as part of the rulemaking proceeding required by subsection (a), an analysis of modifications to the Federal telecommunications system that the Administrator, in his discretion, determines to be necessary to achieve the objectives of subsection (a); and

(B) submit a report on the results of such analysis to each House of the Congress;

Reports.

(4) within 180 days after completion of such analysis, prescribe the regulations required by subsection (a);

Regulations.

(5) assemble, publish, and maintain a directory of TDD and other devices used by Federal agencies to comply with such regulations, and publish, in Federal agency directories, access numbers of TDD's and such other devices; and

(6) after consultation with the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board, adopt the design of a standard logo to signify the presence of a TDD or other device used by a Federal agency to comply with such regulations.

(c) CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT.—The Administrator shall not prescribe the regulation required by subsection (a) before the end of the 90-day period beginning on the date the Administrator submits the report required by subsection (b)(3)(B).

40 USC 762b.

SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.

(a) SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH.—The Administrator shall, in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission, seek to promote research by Federal agencies, State agencies, and private entities to reduce the cost and improve the capabilities of telecommunications devices and systems that provide accessibility to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.

(b) PLANNING TO ASSIMILATE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS.—The Administrator, in planning future alterations to and modifications of the Federal telecommunications system, shall take into account results of the analysis required by section 3(b)(3) and any technological improvements in telecommunications devices and systems that provide accessibility to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.

40 USC 762c.

SEC. 5. INQUIRY REGARDING INTERSTATE TDD RELAY SYSTEM.

The Federal Communications Commission shall, within 9 months after the date of enactment of this Act, complete its existing inquiry regarding an interstate relay system for users of TDD's.

40 USC 762d.

SEC. 6. TDD INSTALLATION BY CONGRESS.

As soon as practicable, each House of the Congress shall establish a policy under which Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, as the case may be, may obtain TDD's for use in communicating with hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals, and for the use of hearing-impaired and speech-impaired employees.

Approved October 28, 1988.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.R. 4992 (S. 2221):

HOUSE REPORTS: No. 100-1058, Pt. 1 (Comm. on Energy and Commerce).

SENATE REPORTS: No. 100-464 accompanying S. 2221 (Comm. on Commerce, Science, and Transportation).

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 134 (1988):

Aug. 10, S. 2221 considered and passed Senate.

Oct. 12, H.R. 4992 considered and passed House.

Oct. 14, considered and passed Senate.