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By: **Delegates Benson, Barve, Bobo, Cane, Conroy, DeBoy, Eckardt, Elmore, Frush, Gutierrez, Harrison, Haynes, Howard, Jones, Kirk, Krysiak, Malone, McIntosh, Moe, Murray, O'Donnell, Paige, Pendergrass, Quinter, Ross, Sophocleus, Taylor, F. Turner, and Vaughn**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2003  
Assigned to: Health and Government Operations

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A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **State Department of Education - Division of Library Development and**  
3 **Services - Distribution of Accessible Information to Disabled Individuals**

4 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Budget and Management, in  
5 consultation with the Governor's Office for Individuals with Disabilities, to  
6 establish and administer a program relating to the reimbursement of certain  
7 costs; requiring the Department, in consultation with the Governor's Advisory  
8 Board for Telecommunications Relay and the Governor's Office for Individuals  
9 with Disabilities to enter a certain agreement with the State Department of  
10 Education, Division of Library Development and Services, providing for a  
11 certain payment to be made relating to the distribution of accessible  
12 information; requiring the Division to provide certain individuals certain access  
13 to an audio news and information service; amending a certain subtitle; defining  
14 certain terms; and generally relating to the distribution of accessible  
15 information to disabled individuals.

16 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
17 Article - State Finance and Procurement  
18 Section 3-901 and 3-902(a) to be under the amended subtitle "Subtitle 9.  
19 Telecommunications Devices and Distribution of Accessible Information for  
20 Disabled Individuals"  
21 Annotated Code of Maryland  
22 (2001 Replacement Volume and 2002 Supplement)

23 BY adding to  
24 Article - State Finance and Procurement  
25 Section 3-906  
26 Annotated Code of Maryland  
27 (2001 Replacement Volume and 2002 Supplement)

1 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
2 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

3 **Article - State Finance and Procurement**

4 Subtitle 9. Telecommunications Devices AND DISTRIBUTION OF ACCESSIBLE  
5 INFORMATION for Disabled Individuals.

6 3-901.

7 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

8 (b) "Board" means the Governor's Advisory Board for Telecommunications  
9 Relay as defined under § 3-801 of this title.

10 (c) "DISTRIBUTION OF ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION" MEANS COMPUTERIZED  
11 AUDIO INFORMATION, INCLUDING NEWSPAPERS, PROVIDED TO PERSONS ELIGIBLE  
12 FOR SERVICE FROM THE MARYLAND STATE LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND AND  
13 PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

14 (D) "Program" means the program developed and administered by the  
15 Department in consultation with the Board and the Governor's Office for Individuals  
16 with Disabilities to provide financial assistance for the purchase of specialized  
17 customer premises equipment (SCPE) by eligible program participants.

18 [(d)] (E) "Program participant" means a person who:

19 (1) is a resident of the State;

20 (2) is certified by a licensed professional as having a disability which  
21 seriously limits or prohibits the use of the basic telephone network without  
22 specialized customer premises equipment;

23 (3) is certified by a licensed professional as being able to use specialized  
24 customer premises equipment for which application is made;

25 (4) meets the financial eligibility requirements established by the  
26 Governor's Office for Individuals with Disabilities as a recipient of:

27 (i) Transitional Emergency Medical and Housing Assistance  
28 (TEMHA);

29 (ii) Supplemental Security Income (SSI); or

30 (iii) Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC); and

31 (5) at the time of application is not receiving similar services which are  
32 available and can be provided in a timely manner through another program.

33 (F) "QUALIFIED ENTITY" MEANS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION WHICH:

1 (I) PRODUCES AUDIO EDITIONS OF DAILY NEWSPAPERS,  
2 AVAILABLE FOR INTERSTATE DISTRIBUTION USING HIGH-SPEED COMPUTER AND  
3 TELECOMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY; AND

4 (II) PROVIDES A MEANS OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND  
5 READER REGISTRATION ON THE INTERNET.

6 [(e)] (G) "Specialized customer premises equipment" or "equipment" means  
7 any communications devices designed to assist program participants in using the  
8 basic telephone network.

9 [(f)] (H) "System" means the method which the Department shall use to  
10 provide financial assistance to eligible program participants for the purchase of the  
11 equipment.

12 3-902.

13 (a) The Department in consultation with the Board and the Governor's Office  
14 for Individuals with Disabilities shall establish and administer a program to assist  
15 eligible program participants to purchase specialized customer premises equipment  
16 AND FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF COSTS UNDER § 3-906 OF THIS SUBTITLE in  
17 accordance with § 3-807 of this title and the State budget.

18 3-906.

19 (A) THE DEPARTMENT IN CONSULTATION WITH THE BOARD AND THE  
20 GOVERNOR'S OFFICE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES SHALL ENTER INTO AN  
21 AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, DIVISION OF LIBRARY  
22 DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES, PROVIDING FOR AN ANNUAL PAYMENT TO BE MADE  
23 TO THE DIVISION IN AN AMOUNT EQUAL TO THE COST INCURRED FOR THE  
24 DISTRIBUTION OF ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION.

25 (B) UNDER THE AGREEMENT THE DIVISION SHALL PROVIDE ELIGIBLE BLIND  
26 AND DISABLED INDIVIDUALS WITH ACCESS TO AN AUDIO NEWS AND INFORMATION  
27 SERVICE PRODUCED BY A QUALIFIED ENTITY.

28 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
29 October 1, 2003.