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SENATE MEMORIAL 15

43RD LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 1997

INTRODUCED BY

Shannon Robinson

A MEMORIAL

ENCOURAGING THE USE OF REAL-TIME CAPTIONING AS A MEANS TOWARD  
GREATER ACCESS FOR THE HARD OF HEARING.

WHEREAS, in New Mexico alone there are over one hundred  
sixteen thousand persons categorized with the degree of hearing  
loss that makes them unable to hear or understand the spoken  
word, and nearly fifty thousand New Mexicans experience a  
moderate to profound degree of deafness; and

WHEREAS, most employees, co-workers and people in general  
are unaware of how to communicate effectively with fellow human  
beings who are deaf or hard of hearing; and

WHEREAS, the lack of access to hearing assistance  
experienced by the hearing impaired is appalling; and

WHEREAS, in the past several years measures have been taken  
at the federal level to help alleviate the difficulty that the

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1 hearing impaired experience in their everyday lives; and

2 WHEREAS, what is termed "closed-captioning" benefits  
3 individuals with hearing disabilities by displaying the audio  
4 portion of a television signal as printed words on the  
5 television screen; and

6 WHEREAS, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 mandates that  
7 the federal communications commission require video providers to  
8 supply "closed-captioning" in programming by August 1997; and

9 WHEREAS, captioning services provide a means of removing  
10 communication barriers as well as giving equal access to the  
11 hearing impaired; and

12 WHEREAS, real-time captioning is a technology that enables  
13 simultaneous, word-for-word transcription of a speaker's words  
14 at conferences and committee meetings as well as in the  
15 classroom, translating the spoken word either to a laptop  
16 computer held by the user or to a monitor for viewing by many;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, real-time captioning technology requires the  
19 skills of a court reporter who has been trained to use specially  
20 developed software and stenographic keyboards and computers to  
21 create captions; and

22 WHEREAS, without captioning those who are hearing impaired  
23 depend on communication avenues such as amplification, adaptive  
24 behavior, such as facing the listener and carefully enunciating,  
25 and the written word, the last of which is the most reliable;

