

Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. 24-0812.01 Jane Ritter x4342

SENATE BILL 24-153

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Danielson,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

(None),

Senate Committees

Business, Labor, & Technology

House Committees

A BILL FOR AN ACT

101 CONCERNING FREE AUDIO NEWS SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE
102 PRINT-DISABLED.

Bill Summary

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <http://leg.colorado.gov>.)

The bill authorizes the National Federation of the Blind of Colorado to expand its current offerings for blind and print-disabled Coloradans through the NFB-NEWSLINE and Project Literacy. The expansion includes providing an expanded array of information and literacy support services throughout the state, such as a variety of communication-related assistive technologies and blindness-related

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

services, introductory training, and methods to find and use additional resources in or near communities; adding a technical assistance line; and adding a full-time staff member.

1 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

2 **SECTION 1.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** article 25 to title
3 26 as follows:

4 **ARTICLE 25**

5 **Free Audio News Service for Persons**

6 **Who Are Blind or Print-disabled**

7 **26-25-101. Legislative declaration.** (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
8 FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

9 (a) ON-TIME AND INDEPENDENT ACCESS TO FREE AUDIO NEWS
10 SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND OR OTHERWISE PRINT-DISABLED
11 IS ESSENTIAL TO INCREASING EMPLOYMENT, ENHANCING EDUCATION, AND
12 IMPROVING THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THESE INDIVIDUALS BY
13 PROVIDING BROAD ACCESS TO ENTERTAINMENT, RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL,
14 CULTURAL, AND COMMUNITY LIFE;

15 (b) NFB-NEWSLINE, A SERVICE OPERATED BY THE NATIONAL
16 FEDERATION OF THE BLIND, IS A FREE AUDIO NEWS SERVICE, ENABLING
17 INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BLIND OR OTHERWISE PRINT-DISABLED TO ACCESS
18 MORE THAN FIVE HUNDRED PUBLICATIONS, INCLUDING DAILY, WEEKLY,
19 AND MONTHLY REGIONAL, NATIONAL, AND INTERNATIONAL NEWSPAPERS
20 AND MAGAZINES;

21 (c) AN AUDIO NEWS SERVICE SUCH AS NFB-NEWSLINE IS A
22 CRITICAL WAY TO FULLY INTEGRATE BLIND SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN, BLIND
23 WORKING-AGE ADULTS, BLIND VETERANS, AND BLIND SENIORS INTO
24 SOCIETY WITH FULL EQUALITY;

1 (d) THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO'S
2 PROJECT LITERACY PROGRAMS, INCLUDING NFB-NEWSLINE, HAVE BEEN
3 A SIGNIFICANT TOOL IN BRINGING NEWS AND INFORMATION TO REMOTE
4 AREAS OF OUR STATE;

5 (e) THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND PERSONS
6 WHO ARE BLIND OR PRINT-DISABLED IN COLORADO, MANY OF WHOM ARE
7 ISOLATED AND UNAWARE OF THE TREMENDOUS FREE AUDIO SERVICES
8 PROVIDED BY NFB-NEWSLINE; AND

9 (f) THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO HAS
10 DETERMINED THAT THERE IS A GREAT NEED TO EXPAND ITS CURRENT
11 PROGRAMMING BY PROVIDING AN EXPANDED ARRAY OF INFORMATION,
12 LITERACY SUPPORT, AND FREE AUDIO NEWS SERVICES THROUGHOUT
13 COLORADO FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND OR PRINT-DISABLED.

14 (2) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THEREFORE FINDS THAT THERE IS A
15 DEMONSTRATED NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO MEET THE
16 INFORMATION NEEDS OF COLORADO'S GROWING POPULATION OF CITIZENS
17 WHO ARE BLIND AND PRINT-DISABLED. COLORADO'S CURRENT
18 NFB-NEWSLINE PROGRAMMING IS PARTIALLY FUNDED THROUGH THE
19 COLORADO TELEPHONE USERS WITH DISABILITIES FUND, ESTABLISHED IN
20 SECTION 40-17-104, IN THE AMOUNT OF ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY
21 THOUSAND DOLLARS PER YEAR, YET IN ORDER TO DEVELOP MORE
22 PROGRAMMING AND REACH MORE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE STATE,
23 PARTICULARLY THOSE IN REMOTE AREAS, ADDITIONAL FUNDING IN THE
24 AMOUNT OF ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IS NEEDED.

25 **26-25-102. NFB-NEWSLINE - Project Literacy - Colorado**
26 **telephone users with disabilities fund - funding.** (1) THE NATIONAL
27 FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO IS AUTHORIZED TO EXPAND ITS

1 CURRENT OFFERINGS FOR BLIND AND PRINT-DISABLED COLORADANS
2 THROUGH THE NFB-NEWSLINE AND PROJECT LITERACY. THIS
3 EXPANSION INCLUDES PROVIDING AN ENLARGED ARRAY OF INFORMATION
4 AND LITERACY SUPPORT SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE STATE, SUCH AS A
5 VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION-RELATED ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES AND
6 BLINDNESS-RELATED SERVICES, INTRODUCTORY TRAINING, AND METHODS
7 TO FIND AND USE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN OR NEAR COMMUNITIES
8 WHERE A PERSON LIVES. THE EXPANSION OF NFB-NEWSLINE AND THE
9 PROJECT LITERACY PROGRAMS MAY INCLUDE:

10 (a) THE ADDITION OF A FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBER, OR PART-TIME
11 CONTRACTORS EQUIVALENT TO ONE FULL-TIME STAFF MEMBER, TO
12 MARKET THE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS AND FACILITATE MONTHLY
13 INFORMATION-SHARING SESSIONS, FOCUS GROUPS, AND MEET-UPS;

14 (b) THE CREATION OF A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE LINE THAT
15 PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND OR PRINT-DISABLED CAN CALL WITH TECHNICAL
16 QUESTIONS RELATED TO ACCESS DEVICES AND RECEIVE TIMELY
17 FOLLOW-UP TRAINING AND SUPPORT; AND

18 (c) THE PROVISION OF A VARIETY OF COMMUNICATION-RELATED
19 ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGIES.

20 (2) THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF COLORADO
21 SHALL COLLABORATE AS NECESSARY ON THE EXPANSION OF
22 NFB-NEWSLINE AND PROJECT LITERACY PROGRAMS WITH, AT A
23 MINIMUM, ACCESS TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS, THE COLORADO DIVISION OF
24 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS, CIVIC
25 ORGANIZATIONS, AND COMMUNITY LIBRARIES.

26 (3) THE PROGRAMS DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED THROUGH THIS
27 SECTION MUST BE FUNDED THROUGH THE COLORADO TELEPHONE USERS

1 WITH DISABILITIES FUND, ESTABLISHED PURSUANT TO SECTION 40-17-104.

2 **SECTION 2.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 40-17-104, **amend**
3 (1)(a), (1)(b) introductory portion, (1)(b)(III), and (1)(b)(IV); and **add**
4 (1)(b)(V) as follows:

5 **40-17-104. Colorado telephone users with disabilities fund -**
6 **creation - purpose.** (1) (a) Except as otherwise authorized to be retained
7 by section 40-17-103 (3)(e), all money collected by the voice service
8 providers in accordance with section 40-17-103 shall be transmitted to the
9 state treasurer, who shall credit the money to the Colorado telephone
10 users with disabilities fund, which fund is hereby created and is referred
11 to in this article 17 as the "fund". THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY SHALL MAKE
12 APPROPRIATIONS TO THE FUND AS NECESSARY FOR THE PURPOSES OF
13 FUNDING THE PROGRAMS SET FORTH IN SUBSECTION (1)(b) OF THIS
14 SECTION.

15 (b) The general assembly shall make annual appropriations out of
16 the fund AS FOLLOWS:

17 (III) To provide support for library services as authorized by
18 section 24-90-105 (1)(e); and

19 (IV) To provide support for the family and community intervener
20 program established in section 26-21-106 (8.5); AND

21 (V) TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE STATEWIDE EXPANSION AND
22 DELIVERY OF FREE AUDIO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WHO ARE BLIND AND
23 PRINT-DISABLED THROUGH THE NFB-NEWSLINE AND PROJECT
24 LITERACY PROGRAMS AUTHORIZED PURSUANT TO SECTION 26-25-102.

25 **SECTION 3. Safety clause.** The general assembly finds,
26 determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
27 preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for

- 1 the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state
- 2 institutions.