

Committee on Regulated Industries

CS/CS/SB 344 — Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991

by Appropriations Committee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government;
Regulated Industries Committee; and Senators Rodriguez and Berman

The bill revises Florida’s Telecommunications Access System Act of 1991 (TASA), which provides for services to enable individuals with hearing or speech disabilities to connect them to standard (i.e., voice) telephone users. Specifically, the bill:

- Revises the intent of the TASA law to add a statement that “the telecommunications access system should provide access to specialized communications technology capable of using existing or future devices or equipment necessary for persons with hearing loss or speech impairment or who are deafblind to access telecommunications services”;
- Revises the TASA law to reflect modern advances in communications technology by:
 - Authorizing the use of advanced technologies beyond the landline telephone communications system authorized in TASA;
 - Allowing for the adoption of new, emerging, and not yet contemplated communications technologies as they come into the marketplace;
- Revises the membership of TASA’s advisory committee;
- Establishes income qualifications for recipients of specialized communications technology. These requirements must be based upon income qualifications or participation in other state or federal programs based on income, which requirements must be set at no less than double, but no more than triple, the federal poverty level;
- Makes technical revisions, including updating terminology referencing persons with specific disabilities;
- Prohibits the Public Service Commission from increasing surcharges assessed to subscribers for each of their basic telecommunications access lines (i.e. landlines) to fund TASA services when excess funds exist in the TASA administrator’s reserve fund; and
- Decreases the maximum permitted surcharge from \$.25 to \$.15, per land line, per month.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 112-0