



375282

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
02/18/2025	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

---

The Committee on Regulated Industries (Rodriguez) recommended the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete lines 260 - 462  
and insert:  
value. This paragraph does not apply to specialized telecommunications devices using standard telephone lines.

(3) (a) The commission shall select a ~~the~~ provider of ~~the~~ telecommunications relay service pursuant to procedures established by the commission. In selecting a ~~the~~ service provider, the commission shall take into consideration the cost



375282

11 of providing ~~the~~ relay service and the interests of the hearing  
12 loss, speech impairment, and deafblind ~~impaired and speech~~  
13 ~~impaired~~ community in having access to a high-quality and  
14 technologically advanced telecommunications system. The  
15 commission shall award the contract to the bidder whose proposal  
16 is the most advantageous to the state, taking into consideration  
17 the following:

18 1. The appropriateness and accessibility of the proposed  
19 telecommunications relay service for the residents ~~citizens~~ of  
20 this ~~the~~ state, including persons with hearing loss or speech  
21 impairment or who are deafblind ~~who are hearing impaired or~~  
22 ~~speech impaired~~.

23 2. The overall quality of the proposed telecommunications  
24 relay service.

25 3. The charges for the proposed telecommunications relay  
26 service system.

27 4. The ability and qualifications of the bidder to provide  
28 the proposed telecommunications relay service as outlined in the  
29 request for proposals.

30 5. Any proposed service enhancements and technological  
31 enhancements which improve service without significantly  
32 increasing cost.

33 6. Any proposed inclusion of provision of assistance to  
34 deaf persons with special needs to access the ~~basic~~  
35 telecommunications system.

36 7. The ability to meet the proposed commencement date for  
37 the telecommunications relay service.

38 8. All other factors listed in the request for proposals.

39 (4) (a) The commission shall establish a mechanism to



375282

40 recover the costs of implementing and maintaining the services  
41 required pursuant to this part which must ~~shall~~ be applied to  
42 each basic telecommunications access line. In establishing the  
43 recovery mechanism, the commission shall:

44 1. Require all local exchange telecommunications companies  
45 to impose a monthly surcharge on all local exchange  
46 telecommunications company subscribers on an individual access  
47 line basis, except that such surcharge may ~~shall~~ not be imposed  
48 upon more than 25 basic telecommunications access lines per  
49 account bill rendered.

50 2. Require all local exchange telecommunications companies  
51 to include the surcharge as a part of the local service charge  
52 that appears on the customer's bill, except that the local  
53 exchange telecommunications company shall specify the surcharge  
54 on the initial bill to the subscriber and itemize it at least  
55 once annually.

56 3. Allow the local exchange telecommunications company to  
57 deduct and retain 1 percent of the total surcharge amount  
58 collected each month to recover the billing, collecting,  
59 remitting, and administrative costs attributed to the surcharge.

60 ~~(5) The commission shall require each local exchange~~  
61 ~~telecommunications company to begin assessing and collecting the~~  
62 ~~surcharge in the amount of 5 cents per access line per month on~~  
63 ~~bills rendered on or after July 1, 1991, for remission to the~~  
64 ~~administrator for deposit in the operational fund. Each local~~  
65 exchange telecommunications company shall remit moneys collected  
66 to the administrator. ~~On August 15, 1991, each local exchange~~  
67 ~~telecommunications company shall begin remitting the moneys~~  
68 ~~collected to the administrator on a monthly basis and in a~~



375282

69 manner as prescribed by the commission. The administrator shall  
70 use such moneys to administer the telecommunications access to  
71 cover costs incurred during the development of the  
72 telecommunications relay services and to establish and  
73 administer the specialized telecommunications devices system.

74 ~~(6) The commission shall establish a schedule for~~  
75 ~~completion of specific stages of the telecommunications relay~~  
76 ~~service development and implementation except that the statewide~~  
77 ~~telecommunications relay service shall commence on or before~~  
78 ~~June 1, 1992.~~

79 ~~(7)~~ The commission shall require the administrator to  
80 submit financial statements for the distribution of specialized  
81 telecommunications devices and for specialized communications  
82 technology and for the telecommunications relay service to the  
83 commission quarterly, in the manner prescribed by the  
84 commission.

85 ~~(7)(8)~~ The commission shall adopt rules and may take any  
86 other action necessary to implement ~~the provisions of~~ this act.

87 ~~(8)(9)~~ The commission shall prepare an annual report on the  
88 operation of the telecommunications access system and, which  
89 shall make such report ~~be~~ available on the commission's ~~Internet~~  
90 website. Reports must be prepared in consultation with the  
91 administrator and the advisory committee appointed pursuant to  
92 s. 427.706. The reports must, at a minimum, briefly outline the  
93 status of developments in the telecommunications access system,  
94 the number of persons served, the call volume, revenues and  
95 expenditures, the allocation of the revenues and expenditures  
96 between provision of specialized telecommunications devices and  
97 specialized communications technologies to individuals and



375282

98 operation of statewide relay service, other major policy or  
99 operational issues, and proposals for improvements or changes to  
100 the telecommunications access system.

101 Section 4. Paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (1),  
102 subsection (4), paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (5), and  
103 subsection (7) of section 427.705, Florida Statutes, are amended  
104 to read:

105 427.705 Administration of the telecommunications access  
106 system.—

107 (1) Consistent with the provisions of this act and rules  
108 and regulations established by the commission, the administrator  
109 shall:

110 (a) Purchase, license, store, distribute, and maintain  
111 specialized telecommunications devices, equipment, and  
112 specialized communications technology, either directly or  
113 through contract with third parties, or a combination thereof.

114 (c) Administer training services for recipients of  
115 specialized telecommunications devices, equipment, and  
116 specialized communications technology and for telecommunications  
117 relay service users as directed by the commission through  
118 contract with third parties.

119 (4) In contracting for the provision of distribution of  
120 specialized telecommunications devices, outreach services, and  
121 training of recipients, the administrator shall consider  
122 contracting with organizations that provide services to persons  
123 with hearing loss or speech impairment or who are deafblind ~~who~~  
124 ~~are hearing impaired or speech impaired.~~

125 (5) The administrator shall provide for the distribution of  
126 specialized telecommunications devices to persons qualified to



375282

127 receive such equipment in accordance with the provisions of this  
128 act. The administrator shall establish procedures for the  
129 distribution of specialized telecommunications devices and shall  
130 solicit the advice and counsel and consider the recommendations  
131 of the advisory committee in establishing such procedures. The  
132 procedures shall:

133 (a) Provide for certification of persons with hearing loss  
134 or speech impairment or who are deafblind ~~as hearing impaired,~~  
135 ~~speech impaired, or dual sensory impaired.~~ Such certification  
136 process must ~~shall~~ include a statement attesting to such  
137 impairment by a licensed physician, audiologist, speech-language  
138 pathologist, hearing aid specialist, ~~or~~ deaf service center  
139 director, or regional distribution center director; by a state-  
140 certified teacher of the hearing impaired; by a state-certified  
141 teacher of the visually impaired; or by an appropriate state or  
142 federal agency. The licensed physician, audiologist, speech-  
143 language pathologist, hearing aid specialist, state-certified  
144 teacher of the hearing impaired, or state-certified teacher of  
145 the visually impaired providing statements which attest to such  
146 impairments shall work within their individual scopes of  
147 practice according to their education and training. The deaf  
148 service center directors, regional distribution center  
149 directors, and appropriate state and federal agencies shall  
150 attest to such impairments as provided for in the procedures  
151 developed by the administrator.

152 (b) Establish characteristics and performance standards for  
153 specialized telecommunications devices and specialized  
154 communications technologies determined to be necessary, and for  
155 the selection of equipment to be purchased for distribution to



375282

156 qualified recipients. The characteristics and standards must  
157 ~~shall~~ be modified as advances in equipment technology render  
158 such standards inapplicable.

159 (7) The administrator shall assume responsibility for  
160 distribution of specialized telecommunications devices and  
161 specialized communications technologies.

162 Section 5. Subsections (1) and (2) of section 427.706,  
163 Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

164 427.706 Advisory committee.—

165 (1) The commission shall appoint an advisory committee to  
166 assist the commission with implementing ~~the implementation of~~  
167 ~~the provisions of~~ this part. The committee shall be composed of  
168 no more than 10 persons and shall include, to the extent  
169 practicable, persons recommended by organizations representing,  
170 the following groups:

171 (a) The ~~Two~~ deaf ~~persons recommended by the Florida~~  
172 ~~Association of the Deaf.~~

173 (b) Persons with hearing loss ~~One hearing impaired person~~  
174 ~~recommended by Self-Help for the Hard of Hearing.~~

175 (c) The deafblind ~~One deaf and blind person recommended by~~  
176 ~~the Coalition for Persons with Dual Sensory Disabilities.~~

177 (d) Persons with speech impairment ~~One speech impaired~~  
178 ~~person recommended by the Florida Language Speech and Hearing~~  
179 ~~Association.~~

180 (e) The elderly ~~Two representatives of telecommunications~~  
181 ~~companies.~~

182 (f) ~~One person with experience in providing~~  
183 Telecommunication relay service distribution centers services  
184 ~~recommended by the Deaf Service Center Association.~~



375282

185           (g) Communications service providers ~~One person recommended~~  
186 ~~by the Advocacy Center for Persons with Disabilities, Inc.~~

187           ~~(h) One person recommended by the Florida League of~~  
188 ~~Seniors.~~

189           (2) The advisory committee shall provide the expertise,  
190 experience, and perspective of persons with hearing loss or  
191 speech impairment or who are deafblind ~~who are hearing impaired~~  
192 ~~or speech impaired~~ to the commission and to the administrator  
193 during all phases of the development and operation of the  
194 telecommunications access system. The advisory committee shall  
195 advise the commission and the administrator on the quality and  
196 cost-effectiveness of the telecommunications relay service and  
197 the specialized telecommunications devices, equipment, and  
198 specialized communications technologies distribution system. The  
199 advisory committee may submit material for inclusion in the  
200 annual report prepared pursuant to s. 427.704.

201  
202 ===== T I T L E   A M E N D M E N T =====

203 And the title is amended as follows:

204           Delete lines 19 - 23

205 and insert:

206           implementing the act; providing an effective date.