

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 970

To provide competitive grants for training court reporters and realtime writers to meet requirements for closed captioning under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 27, 2003

Mr. KIND (for himself, Mr. ISAKSON, Mr. HOLT, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. BOSWELL, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. FILNER, Mrs. MALONEY, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. LYNCH, Mrs. CAPITO, Mr. ADERHOLT, Mrs. BIGGERT, and Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

A BILL

To provide competitive grants for training court reporters and realtime writers to meet requirements for closed captioning under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Training for Realtime
5 Writers Act of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) As directed by Congress in section 723 of
2 the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 613),
3 as added by section 305 of the Telecommunications
4 Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–104; 110 Stat. 126),
5 the Federal Communications Commission adopted
6 rules requiring closed captioning of most television
7 programming, which gradually require new video
8 programming to be fully captioned beginning in
9 2006.

10 (2) More than 28,000,000 Americans, or 8 per-
11 cent of the population, are considered deaf or hard
12 of hearing and many require captioning services to
13 participate in mainstream activities.

14 (3) More than 24,000 children are born in the
15 United States each year with some form of hearing
16 loss.

17 (4) According to the United States Department
18 of Health and Human Services and a study done by
19 the National Council on Aging—

20 (A) 25 percent of Americans over 65 years
21 old are hearing impaired;

22 (B) 33 percent of Americans over 70 years
23 old are hearing impaired; and

24 (C) 41 percent of Americans over 75 years
25 old are hearing impaired.

1 (5) The National Council on Aging study also
2 found that depression in older adults may be directly
3 related to hearing loss and disconnection with the
4 spoken word.

5 (6) Empirical research demonstrates that cap-
6 tions improve the performance of those individuals
7 learning to read English and, according to numerous
8 Federal agencies' statistics, could benefit—

9 (A) 3.7 million remedial readers;

10 (B) 12 million young children learning to
11 read;

12 (C) 27 million illiterate adults; and

13 (D) 30 million people for whom English is
14 a second language.

15 (7) Over the past 5 years, student enrollment in
16 programs that train court reporters to become
17 realtime writers has decreased significantly, causing
18 such programs to close on many campuses.

19 **SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT PROGRAM TO PRO-**
20 **MOTE TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT OF**
21 **REALTIME WRITERS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Education shall
23 make competitive grants to eligible entities under sub-
24 section (b) to promote training and placement of individ-
25 uals, including individuals who have completed a court re-

1 porting training program, as realtime writers in order to
2 meet the requirements for closed captioning of video pro-
3 gramming set forth in section 723 of the Communications
4 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 613) and the rules prescribed
5 thereunder.

6 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—For purposes of this act,
7 an eligible entity is a court reporting or realtime writing
8 training program that—

9 (1) can document and demonstrate to the Sec-
10 retary of Education that it meets minimum stand-
11 ards of educational and financial accountability, with
12 a curriculum capable of training realtime writers,
13 qualified to provide captioning services;

14 (2) is accredited by an accrediting agency rec-
15 ognized by the Department of Education; and

16 (3) participates in student aid programs under
17 title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20
18 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.)

19 (c) PRIORITY IN GRANTS.—In determining whether
20 to award grants under this section, the Secretary of Edu-
21 cation shall give priority to eligible entities that—

22 (1) demonstrate the greatest ability to increase
23 their capacity to train realtime writers;

24 (2) demonstrate the most promising collabora-
25 tion with local educational institutions, businesses,

1 labor organizations, or other community groups hav-
2 ing the potential to train or provide job placement
3 assistance to realtime writers; and

4 (3) propose the most promising and innovative
5 approaches for initiating or expanding training or
6 job placement assistance efforts for realtime writers.

7 (d) DURATION OF GRANT.—A grant under this sec-
8 tion shall be for a period of 2 years.

9 (e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of
10 a grant provided under subsection (a) to an entity eligible
11 may not exceed \$1,500,000 for the 2-year period of the
12 grant.

13 **SEC. 4. APPLICATION.**

14 To receive a grant under section 3, an eligible entity
15 shall submit an application to the Secretary of Education
16 at such time and in such manner as the Secretary shall
17 require. The application shall include—

18 (1) a description of the training and assistance
19 to be funded using the grant amount, including how
20 such training and assistance will increase the num-
21 ber of realtime writers;

22 (2) a description of performance measures to be
23 utilized to evaluate the progress of individuals re-
24 ceiving such training and assistance in matters relat-

1 ing to enrollment, completion of training, and job
2 placement and retention;

3 (3) a description of the manner in which the eli-
4 gible entity will ensure that recipients of scholar-
5 ships, if any, funded by the grant will be employed
6 and retained as realtime writers;

7 (4) a description of the manner in which the eli-
8 gible entity intends to continue providing the train-
9 ing and assistance to be funded by the grant after
10 the end of the grant period, including any partner-
11 ships or arrangements established for that purpose;

12 (5) a description of how the eligible entity will
13 work with local workforce investment boards to en-
14 sure that training and assistance to be funded with
15 the grant will further local workforce goals, includ-
16 ing the creation of educational opportunities for in-
17 dividuals who are from economically disadvantaged
18 backgrounds or are displaced workers; and

19 (6) such other information as the Secretary
20 may require.

21 **SEC. 5. USE OF FUNDS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity receiving a
23 grant under section 3 shall use the grant amount for pur-
24 poses relating to the recruitment, training, assistance, and
25 job placement of individuals (including individuals who

1 have completed a court reporting training program) as
2 realtime writers, including—

3 (1) recruitment activities;

4 (2) subject to subsection (b), the provision of
5 scholarships to individuals for training in realtime
6 writing;

7 (3) distance learning;

8 (4) design and development of curriculum to
9 more effectively train realtime writing skills and
10 education in the knowledge bases necessary for the
11 delivery of high quality closed captioning services;

12 (5) assistance in job placement for upcoming
13 and recent graduates with all types of captioning
14 employers;

15 (6) encouragement of individuals with disabil-
16 ities to pursue a career in realtime writing; and

17 (7) the employment and payment of personnel
18 for such purposes.

19 (b) SCHOLARSHIPS.—

20 (1) AMOUNT.—The amount of a scholarship
21 under subsection (a)(2) shall be based on the
22 amount of need of the recipient of the scholarship
23 for financial assistance, as determined in accordance
24 with part F of title IV of the Higher Education Act
25 of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087kk).

1 (2) AGREEMENT.—Each recipient of a scholar-
2 ship under subsection (a)(2) shall enter into an
3 agreement with the Secretary of Education to pro-
4 vide realtime writing services for a period of time (as
5 determined by the Secretary) that is appropriate for
6 the amount of the scholarship received.

7 (3) COURSEWORK AND EMPLOYMENT.—The
8 Secretary shall establish requirements for
9 coursework and employment for recipients of schol-
10 arships under subsection (a)(2), including require-
11 ments for repayment of scholarship amounts in the
12 event of failure to meet such requirements for
13 coursework and employment. Requirements for re-
14 payment of scholarship amounts shall take into ac-
15 count the effect of economic conditions on the capac-
16 ity of scholarship recipients to find work as realtime
17 writers.

18 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The recipient of a
19 grant under section 3 may not use more than 5 percent
20 of the grant amount to pay administrative costs associated
21 with activities funded by the grant.

22 (d) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Grants amounts
23 under this Act shall supplement and not supplant other
24 Federal or non-Federal funds of the grant recipient for

1 purposes of promoting the training and placement of indi-
2 viduals as realtime writers.

3 **SEC. 6. REPORTS.**

4 Each eligible entity receiving a grant under section
5 3 shall submit to the Secretary of Education, at the end
6 of each year of the grant period, a report which shall in-
7 clude—

8 (1) a description of the use of grant amounts
9 by the entity during such year;

10 (2) an assessment, utilizing the performance
11 measures submitted by the entity in the application
12 for the grant under section 4(b), of the effectiveness
13 of activities carried out using such funds in increas-
14 ing the number of realtime writers; and

15 (3) a description of the best practices identified
16 by the entity as a result of the grant for increasing
17 the number of individuals who are trained, em-
18 ployed, and retained in employment as realtime writ-
19 ers.

20 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

21 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
22 this Act—

23 (1) \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2004,
24 2005, and 2006; and

1 (2) such sums as may be necessary for fiscal
2 year 2007.

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