

Please Support Always-On Captioning in Public Places

[HF1134](#) (Daniels), [SF1136](#) (Hoffman)

Require closed captioning to be enabled for TVs displayed in public places.

Why is a captioning requirement needed?

Even though twenty percent of Minnesotans have some degree of hearing loss, deaf and hard of hearing Minnesotans continue to encounter businesses and other public places that refuse to enable closed captions on televisions playing for customers. Enabling captions costs nothing. All televisions and content provider devices have for decades included closed-captioning as a standard feature.

What does this bill do?

This bill adds the refusal to provide closed captioning to the list of prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of disability, as outlined in [Minnesota Statute 363A.11.2](#).

Why is captioning important?

Captions are not just for people with hearing loss. Everyone benefits including:

- Anyone in a noisy environment where it is hard to hear, such as a restaurant or bar
- Anyone who is in an environment where the sound must be turned off
- Anyone with auditory or cognitive processing issues, such as those with a traumatic brain injury
- Anyone, including children, learning to read or learning English as a second (or third) language

During emergency broadcasts, captions are especially important for people who might not otherwise have access to time-sensitive public safety information.

Who would be required to enable captioning?

Any place of public accommodation that is providing television services to their clients or customers. A “place of accommodation” is defined by [Minnesota Statute 353A.03.34](#) as a business, accommodation, refreshment, entertainment, recreation, or transportation facility of any kind, whether licensed or not, whose goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations are extended, offered, sold, or otherwise made available to the public.

Isn't this already covered by federal law?

Public places of accommodation are required by Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide people with disabilities access to equal services in an integrated setting. In practice, however, public places are often unprepared to enable captioning when requested and refuse to comply. This bill seeks to alleviate the burden of constant advocacy and help businesses understand that denying this simple, no-cost request is discriminating against 20% of their customer base.