# H. R. 1687

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

# IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 26, 2007

Mr. Kind (for himself, Mr. Regula, Ms. Hooley, Mr. Rogers of Alabama, Mr. Spratt, Mr. McDermott, Mr. Inslee, Mr. Boswell, Mr. Towns, Mr. Sessions, Mr. Gordon of Tennessee, Mr. Ortiz, Mr. Latourette, Mr. Higgins, Mr. Walsh of New York, Mr. Coble, Mr. Shays, Mr. Weller of Illinois, Mr. Kuhl of New York, Ms. Watson, Mr. Grijalva, Ms. Lee, Mr. Carnahan, Mr. Mollohan, Mr. Price of North Carolina, Mr. Nadler, Mr. Petri, Mr. Doyle, Ms. Schakowsky, Mr. Israel, Ms. Sutton, and Ms. Baldwin) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

# A BILL

To provide competitive grants for training court reporters and closed captioners to meet requirements for realtime writers 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,

#### 1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

- This Act may be cited as the "Training for Realtime
- 3 Writers Act of 2007".

## 4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

- 5 Congress makes the following findings:
- 6 (1) As directed by Congress in section 723 of
- 7 the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 613),
- 8 as added by section 305 of the Telecommunications
- 9 Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–104; 110 Stat. 126),
- the Federal Communications Commission began en-
- forcing rules requiring full closed captioning of most
- English television programming on January 1, 2006.
- 13 (2) The Federal Communications Commission
- rules also require that video programming be fully
- captioned in Spanish by 2010.
- 16 (3) More than 30,000,000 Americans are con-
- sidered deaf or hard of hearing, and many require
- captioning services to participate in mainstream ac-
- 19 tivities.
- 20 (4) The National Institute on Deafness and
- other Communication Disorders estimates that 1 in
- 3 Americans over the age of 60 has already experi-
- enced hearing loss. The 79,000,000 Americans who
- are identified as "baby boomers" represent 39 per-
- 25 cent of the population of the United States and most

1	baby boomers began to reach age 60 just in the last
2	few years.
3	(5) Closed captioning is a continuous source of
4	emergency information for people in mass transit
5	and other congregate settings.
6	(6) Empirical research studies since 1988 dem-
7	onstrate that captions improve the performance of
8	individuals learning to read English.
9	SEC. 3. AUTHORIZATION OF GRANT PROGRAM TO PRO-
10	MOTE TRAINING AND JOB PLACEMENT OF
11	REALTIME WRITERS.
12	(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce shall
13	make competitive grants to eligible entities under sub-
14	section (b) to promote training and placement of individ-
15	uals, including individuals who have completed a court re-
16	porting training program, as realtime writers in order to
17	meet the requirements for closed captioning of video pro-
18	gramming set forth in section 723 of the Communications
19	Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 613) and the rules prescribed
20	thereunder.
21	(b) Eligible Entities.—For purposes of this Act,
22	an eligible entity is a court reporting program that—
23	(1) can document and demonstrate to the Sec-
24	retary of Commerce that it meets minimum stand-
25	ards of educational and financial accountability, with

1	a curriculum capable of training realtime writers
2	qualified to provide captioning services;
3	(2) is accredited by an accrediting agency rec-
4	ognized by the Department of Education; and
5	(3) is participating in student aid programs
6	under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965
7	(c) Priority in Grants.—In determining whether
8	to make grants under this section, the Secretary of Com-
9	merce shall give a priority to eligible entities that, as de-
10	termined by the Secretary—
11	(1) possess the most substantial capability to
12	increase their capacity to train realtime writers;
13	(2) demonstrate the most promising collabora-
14	tion with local educational institutions, businesses,
15	labor organizations, or other community groups hav-
16	ing the potential to train or provide job placement
17	assistance to realtime writers; or
18	(3) propose the most promising and innovative
19	approaches for initiating or expanding training or
20	job placement assistance efforts with respect to
21	realtime writers.
22	(d) DURATION OF GRANT.—A grant under this sec-
23	tion shall be for a period of 2 years.
24	(e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of

a grant provided under subsection (a) to an entity eligible

- 1 may not exceed \$1,500,000 for the 2-year period of the
- 2 grant under subsection (d).

#### 3 SEC. 4. APPLICATION.

- 4 (a) In General.—To receive a grant under section
- 5 3, an eligible entity shall submit an application to the Sec-
- 6 retary of Commerce at such time and in such manner as
- 7 the secretary may require. The application shall contain
- 8 the information set forth under subsection (b).
- 9 (b) Information.—Information in the application of
- 10 an eligible entity under subsection (a) for a grant under
- 11 section 3 shall include the following:
- 12 (1) A description of the training and assistance
- to be funded using the grant amount, including how
- such training and assistance will increase the num-
- ber of realtime writers.
- 16 (2) A description of performance measures to
- be utilized to evaluate the progress of individuals re-
- 18 ceiving such training and assistance in matters relat-
- ing to enrollment, completion of training, and job
- 20 placement and retention.
- 21 (3) A description of the manner in which the el-
- igible entity will ensure that recipients of scholar-
- ships, if any, funded by the grant will be employed
- and retained as realtime writers.

- (4) A description of the manner in which the eligible entity intends to continue providing the training and assistance to be funded by the grant after the end of the grant period, including any partnerships or arrangements established for that purpose.
  - (5) A description of how the eligible entity will work with local workforce investment boards to ensure that training and assistance to be funded with the grant will further local workforce goals, including the creation of educational opportunities for individuals who are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds or are displaced workers.
    - (6) Additional information, if any, of the eligibility of the eligible entity for priority in the making of grants under section 3(c).
- (7) Such other information as the Secretarymay require.

#### 18 SEC. 5. USE OF FUNDS.

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- 19 (a) In General.—An eligible entity receiving a
- 20 grant under section 3 shall use the grant amount for pur-
- 21 poses relating to the recruitment, training and assistance,
- 22 and job placement of individuals, including individuals
- 23 who have completed a court reporting training program,
- 24 as realtime writers, including—
- 25 (1) recruitment;

1	(2) subject to subsection (b), the provision of
2	scholarships;
3	(3) distance learning;
4	(4) further developing and implementing both
5	English and Spanish curriculum to more effectively
6	train realtime writing skills, and education in the
7	knowledge necessary for the delivery of high-quality
8	closed captioning services;
9	(5) mentoring students to ensure successful
10	completion of the realtime training and provide as-
11	sistance in job placement;
12	(6) encouraging individuals with disabilities to
13	pursue a career in realtime writing; and
14	(7) the employment and payment of personnel
15	for all such purposes.
16	(b) Scholarships.—
17	(1) Amount.—The amount of a scholarship
18	under subsection (a)(2) shall be based on the
19	amount of need of the recipient of the scholarship
20	for financial assistance, as determined in accordance
21	with part F of title IV of the Higher Education Act
22	of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1087kk).
23	(2) AGREEMENT.—Each recipient of a scholar-
24	ship under subsection (a)(2) shall enter into an

agreement with the school in which the recipient is

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- enrolled to provide realtime writing services for a period of time appropriate (as determined by the Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary's designee) for
- 4 the amount of the scholarship received.
- COURSEWORK AND EMPLOYMENT.—The 6 Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary's designee shall establish requirements for coursework and em-7 8 ployment for recipients of scholarships under sub-9 section (a)(2), including requirements for repayment 10 of scholarship amounts in the event of failure to 11 meet such requirements for coursework and employ-12 ment. Requirements for repayment of scholarship 13 amounts shall take into account the effect of eco-14 nomic conditions on the capacity of scholarship re-15 cipients to find work as realtime writers.
- 16 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.—The recipient of a
  17 grant under section 3 may not use more than 5 percent
  18 of the grant amount to pay administrative costs associated
  19 with activities funded by the grant. The Secretary shall
  20 use not more than 5 percent of the amount available for
  21 grants under this Act in any fiscal year for administrative
  22 costs of the program.
- (d) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Grants amounts
   under this Act shall supplement and not supplant other
   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.

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- 4 (a) Annual Reports.—Each eligible entity receiv-
- 5 ing a grant under section 3 shall submit to the Secretary
- 6 of Commerce, at the end of each year of the grant period,
- 7 a report on the activities of such entity with respect to
- 8 the use of grant amounts during such year.

## (b) Report Information.—

- (1) In General.—Each report of an entity for a year under subsection (a) shall include a description of the use of grant amounts by the entity during such year, including an assessment by the entity of the effectiveness of activities carried out using such funds in increasing the number of realtime writers. The assessment shall utilize the performance measures submitted by the entity in the application for the grant under section 4(b).
- (2) FINAL REPORT.—The final report of an entity on a grant under subsection (a) shall include a description of the best practices identified by the entity as a result of the grant for increasing the number of individuals who are trained, employed, and retained in employment as realtime writers.

- 1 (c) Annual Review.—The Inspector General of the
- 2 Department of Commerce shall conduct an annual review
- 3 of the management, efficiency, and effectiveness of the
- 4 grants made under this Act.

#### 5 SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

- 6 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
- 7 retary of Commerce to carry out this Act \$20,000,000 for
- 8 each of fiscal years 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012.
- 9 SEC. 8. SUNSET.
- This Act is repealed effective the last day of the fifth
- 11 fiscal year in which funds are appropriated to carry out
- 12 this Act.

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