
SENATE BILL NO. 39—COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN RESOURCES AND EDUCATION

(ON BEHALF OF THE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE ON
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES)

PREFILED FEBRUARY 4, 2005

Referred to Committee on Human Resources and Education

SUMMARY—Provides for establishment of statewide nonemergency information and referral telephone system concerning health, welfare, human and social services. (BDR 40-688)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: Yes.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in ***bolded italics*** is new; matter between brackets ~~omitted material~~ is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to health; providing for the establishment of a statewide nonemergency information and referral telephone system concerning health, welfare, human and social services that is accessible by dialing the digits 2-1-1; requiring the use of a portion of a certain surcharge imposed on customers of certain telephone companies and companies which provide wireless phone services to cover part of the costs necessary to establish and maintain the system; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

- 1 The Federal Communications Commission has taken action to assign 211 as
- 2 the dialing code for a nonemergency information and referral telephone system.
- 3 (FCC 00-256, July 21, 2000)
- 4 This bill provides for the establishment and maintenance of a 2-1-1 telephone
- 5 system in Nevada to provide nonemergency information and referrals to the general
- 6 public concerning the health, welfare, human and social services provided by public
- 7 and private entities in this State. The Department of Human Resources must
- 8 establish and maintain the 2-1-1 system in collaboration and cooperation with the
- 9 Public Utilities Commission, local telecommunications companies, state and local



public and private agencies that provide information and referral services and with any group established by the Governor to implement the 2-1-1 system.

Existing law authorizes a surcharge established by the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada to be imposed on each access line of each customer of a telephone company that provides service through a local exchange and each customer of a company that provides wireless phone services. The surcharge must be sufficient to cover the costs of the program that provides telecommunication devices to persons with impaired speech or hearing as well as to fund centers for the deaf and hard of hearing operated by this State. (NRS 426.295)

This bill requires that a portion of the surcharge also be used to cover not more than one-half of the costs of the 2-1-1 telephone system.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Chapter 439 of NRS is hereby amended by adding thereto a new section to read as follows:

1. The Department, in collaboration with any state or local agencies or community-based organizations which provide information and referral services concerning health, welfare, human and social services and any group established by the Governor to implement a statewide information and referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social services, shall establish and maintain a statewide information and referral system to provide nonemergency information and referrals to the general public concerning the health, welfare, human and social services provided by public or private entities in this State. The system must:

(a) Integrate any information and referral systems previously established by state agencies, local agencies or community-based organizations with the system established pursuant to this section;

(b) Be the sole system in this State which is accessible to a person by dialing the digits 2-1-1 and which provides nonemergency information and referrals to the general public concerning the health, welfare, human and social services provided by public or private entities in this State;

(c) Be accessible to a person using the public telephone system by dialing the digits 2-1-1; and

(d) Include information that is updated periodically.

2. In establishing the statewide information and referral system, the Department, any state or local agencies or community-based organizations which provide information and referral services concerning health, welfare, human and social services and any group established by the Governor to implement a statewide information and referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social services shall consult with representatives of:

(a) The Public Utilities Commission of Nevada;



(b) Telephone companies which provide service through a local exchange in this State;

(c) Companies that provide wireless phone services in this State;

(d) Existing information and referral services established by state agencies, local agencies or community-based organizations;

(e) State and local agencies or other organizations that provide health, welfare, human and social services;

(f) Nonprofit organizations; and

(g) Such other agencies, entities and organizations as determined necessary by the Department, any state or local agencies or community-based organizations which provide information and referral services concerning health, welfare, human and social services or any group established by the Governor to implement a statewide information and referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social services.

3. The Public Utilities Commission of Nevada, each telephone company which provides service through a local exchange in this State and each company that provides wireless phone services in this State shall cooperate with the Department, any state or local agencies or community-based organizations which provide information and referral services concerning health, welfare, human and social services and any group established by the Governor to implement a statewide information and referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social services in the establishment of the statewide information and referral system.

Sec. 2. NRS 426.295 is hereby amended to read as follows:

426.295 1. The Office shall develop and administer a program whereby:

(a) Any person who is a customer of a telephone company which provides service through a local exchange or a customer of a company that provides wireless phone service and who is certified by the Office to be deaf or to have severely impaired speech or hearing may obtain a device for telecommunication capable of serving the needs of such persons at no charge to the customer beyond the rate for basic service; and

(b) Any person who is deaf or has severely impaired speech or hearing may communicate by telephone, including, without limitation, a wireless phone, with other persons through a dual-party relay system.

➤ The program must be approved by the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada.

2. A surcharge is hereby imposed on each access line of each customer to the local exchange of any telephone company providing such lines in this State and on each personal wireless access line of each customer of any company that provides wireless phone



services in this State which , *except as otherwise provided in subsection 3*, is sufficient to ~~cover~~ :

(a) *Cover* the costs of the program ~~and to fund~~ developed pursuant to subsection 1;

(b) *Fund* the deaf and hard of hearing centers operated by this State ~~H~~; and

(c) *Cover not more than 50 percent of the costs of establishing and maintaining the statewide information and referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social services.*

3. The *Public Utilities* Commission of Nevada shall establish by regulation the amount to be charged ~~to those companies~~ pursuant to subsection 2. *The portion of the surcharge established to cover the costs of establishing and maintaining the statewide information and referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social services must not exceed 5 cents per month for each access line of each customer and for each personal wireless access line of each customer.*

4. *Each telephone company which provides service through a local exchange and each company that provides wireless phone services in this State* shall collect the surcharge from their customers and transfer the money collected to the Commission pursuant to regulations adopted by the Commission.

~~3.1~~ 5. The Account for *Information and Referral Services* and Services for Persons With Impaired Speech or Hearing is hereby created within the State General Fund and must be administered by the Office. Any money collected from the surcharge imposed pursuant to subsection 2 must be deposited in the State Treasury for credit to the Account. The money in the Account may be used only:

(a) For the purchase, maintenance, repair and distribution of the devices for telecommunication, including the distribution of devices to state agencies and nonprofit organizations;

(b) To establish and maintain the dual-party relay system;

(c) To reimburse telephone companies and companies that provide wireless phone services for the expenses incurred in collecting and transferring to the Commission the surcharge imposed by the Commission;

(d) For the general administration of the program developed and administered pursuant to subsection 1;

(e) To train persons in the use of the devices; ~~and~~

(f) To fund the deaf and hard of hearing centers operated by this State ~~f~~;

~~4.1~~; and



1 (g) *To fund not more than 50 percent of the costs of*
2 *establishing and maintaining the statewide information and*
3 *referral system concerning health, welfare, human and social*
4 *services.*

5 6. For the purposes of this section:

6 (a) "Device for telecommunication" means a device which is
7 used to send messages through the telephone system, including,
8 without limitation, the wireless phone system, which visually
9 displays or prints messages received and which is compatible with
10 the system of telecommunication with which it is being used.

11 (b) "Dual-party relay system" means a system whereby persons
12 who have impaired speech or hearing, and who have been furnished
13 with devices for telecommunication, may relay communications
14 through third parties to persons who do not have access to such
15 devices.

16 (c) *"Statewide information and referral system concerning*
17 *health, welfare, human and social services" means the system*
18 *established pursuant to section 1 of this act.*

19 Sec. 3. The State Controller shall transfer the money in the
20 Account for Services for Persons With Impaired Speech or Hearing
21 to the Account for Information and Referral Services and Services
22 for Persons With Impaired Speech or Hearing created by section 2
23 of this act.

24 Sec. 4. This act becomes effective on July 1, 2005.



