

2013 -- S 0277

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2013

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A N A C T

RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES - RIGHTS OF BLIND AND DEAF PERSONS

Introduced By: Senators Cool Rumsey, Sosnowski, Walaska, Ottiano, and Pichardo

Date Introduced: February 12, 2013

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 40-9.1-1 of the General Laws in Chapter 40-9.1 entitled "Equal
2 Rights of Blind and Deaf Persons to Public Facilities" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **40-9.1-1. Declaration of policy.** -- It is the policy of this state that:

4 (a) Persons who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing and otherwise
5 disabled have the same rights as the able-bodied to the full and free use of the streets, highways,
6 walkways, public buildings, public facilities and other public places.

7 (b) Persons who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing and otherwise
8 disabled are entitled to full and equal accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges on
9 any public conveyance operated on land or water or in the air, or any stations and terminals
10 thereof, not limited to taxis, airplanes, motor vehicles, railroad trains, motor buses, street cars,
11 boats and in any educational institution, not limited to any kindergarten, primary and secondary
12 school, trade or business school, high school, academy, college and university, and in places of
13 public resort, accommodation, assemblage or amusement, not limited to hotels, lodging places,
14 restaurants, theater and in all other places to which the general public is invited, subject only to
15 the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all persons.

16 (c) Persons who are blind, visually impaired, deaf, hard-of-hearing and otherwise
17 disabled persons shall be entitled to rent, lease or purchase, as other members of the general
18 public, any housing accommodations offered for rent, lease or other compensation in this state,
19 subject to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all persons.

1 (d) Effective January 1, 2014, movie theaters with ten (10) or more screens are required
2 to provide captioning on at least one of their screens for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing
3 and to provide audio descriptions for persons who are blind or visually impaired as set forth in
4 regulations established and promulgated by the office of attorney general with the assistance of
5 the Rhode Island commission on the deaf and hard of hearing.

6 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on January 1, 2014.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T
RELATING TO HUMAN SERVICES - RIGHTS OF BLIND AND DEAF PERSONS

1 This act would require movie theaters with ten or more screens to provide captioning on
2 at least one screen for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing, and provide audio descriptions for
3 persons who are blind or visually impaired.

4 This act would take effect on January 1, 2014.

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