

Senate Bill 144

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SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Changes eligibility of person to receive adaptive equipment or assistive telecommunication device from requirement that person be severely hard of hearing or severely speech impaired to requirement that person be hard of hearing or speech impaired.

Allows nurse practitioner to certify all disabilities qualifying person for adaptive equipment or assistive telecommunication device. Allows rehabilitation instructor for person who is blind to certify condition of visual impairment. Allows physician to certify person as speech impaired.

A BILL FOR AN ACT

1
2 Relating to telecommunications devices for persons with disabilities; amending sections 9, 10, 11 and
3 14, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987.

4 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 9, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, as amended by section 2, chapter 872,
6 Oregon Laws 1991, section 32, chapter 280, Oregon Laws 1995, section 2, chapter 451, Oregon Laws
7 1995, section 1, chapter 384, Oregon Laws 1999, section 1, chapter 28, Oregon Laws 2007, and sec-
8 tion 353, chapter 70, Oregon Laws 2007, is amended to read:

9 **Sec. 9.** As used in sections 9 to 14, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, unless the context requires
10 otherwise:

11 (1) "Adaptive equipment" means equipment that permits a person with a disability, other than
12 a person who is hard of hearing or speech impaired, to communicate effectively on the telephone.

13 (2) "Applicant" means a person who applies for an assistive telecommunication device, adaptive
14 equipment or a signal device.

15 (3) "Assistive telecommunication device" means a device that utilizes a keyboard, acoustic cou-
16 pler, display screen, Braille display, speakerphone or amplifier to enable people who are deaf, deaf-
17 blind, [*severely*] hard of hearing or [*severely*] speech impaired to communicate effectively on the
18 telephone.

19 (4) "Audiologist" means a person who has a master's or doctoral degree in audiology and a
20 Certificate of Clinical Competence in audiology from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Asso-
21 ciation.

22 (5) "Deaf" means a profound hearing loss, as determined by an audiologist, **licensed physician,**
23 **nurse practitioner, hearing aid specialist** or [*a*] vocational rehabilitation counselor of the De-
24 partment of Human Services, that requires use of an assistive telecommunication device to commu-
25 nicate effectively on the telephone.

26 (6) "Deaf-blind" means a hearing loss and a visual impairment[, *as determined by a licensed*
27 *physician and by an audiologist or a vocational rehabilitation counselor of the Department of Human*
28 *Services,*] that require use of an assistive telecommunication device to communicate effectively on

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 the telephone. **For purposes of this subsection:**

2 (a) **A hearing loss must be determined by an audiologist, licensed physician, nurse prac-**
3 **titioner, hearing aid specialist or vocational rehabilitation counselor of the Department of**
4 **Human Services.**

5 (b) **A visual impairment must be determined by a licensed physician, nurse practitioner,**
6 **vocational rehabilitation counselor of the Department of Human Services or rehabilitation**
7 **instructor for persons who are blind.**

8 (7) "Disability" means a physical condition, as determined by a licensed physician, **nurse**
9 **practitioner** or vocational rehabilitation counselor of the Department of Human Services, other
10 than hearing or speech impairment that requires use of adaptive equipment to utilize the telephone.

11 (8) **"Hard of hearing" means a hearing loss, as determined by an audiologist, licensed**
12 **physician, nurse practitioner, hearing aid specialist or vocational rehabilitation counselor of**
13 **the Department of Human Services, that requires use of an assistive telecommunication de-**
14 **vice to communicate effectively on the telephone.**

15 [(8)] (9) "Hearing aid specialist" means a person licensed to deal in hearing aids under ORS
16 chapter 694.

17 (10) **"Nurse practitioner" has the meaning given that term in ORS 678.010.**

18 [(9)] (11) "Physician" means an applicant's primary care physician or a medical specialist who
19 is able to determine an applicant's disability and to whom the applicant was referred by the primary
20 care physician.

21 [(10)] (12) "Recipient" means a person who receives adaptive equipment, an assistive telecom-
22 munication device or a signal device.

23 (13) **"Rehabilitation instructor for persons who are blind" means an employee of the**
24 **Commission for the Blind who:**

25 (a) **Meets the minimum qualifications set by the commission to assess adult clients re-**
26 **ferred for services;**

27 (b) **Develops individualized training programs; and**

28 (c) **Instructs and counsels clients of the commission on adapting to sight loss.**

29 [(11) "*Severely hard of hearing*" means a hearing loss, as determined by an audiologist or voca-
30 tional rehabilitation counselor of the Department of Human Services, that requires use of an assistive
31 telecommunication device to communicate effectively on the telephone.]

32 [(12) "*Severely speech impaired*" means a speech disability, as determined by a speech-language
33 pathologist or vocational rehabilitation counselor of the Department of Human Services, that requires
34 use of an assistive telecommunication device to communicate effectively on the telephone.]

35 [(13)] (14) "Signal device" means a mechanical device that alerts a person who is deaf, deaf-blind
36 or [*severely*] hard of hearing of an incoming telephone call.

37 (15) **"Speech impaired" means a speech disability, as determined by a licensed physician,**
38 **nurse practitioner, speech-language pathologist or vocational rehabilitation counselor of the**
39 **Department of Human Services, that requires use of an assistive telecommunication device**
40 **to communicate effectively on the telephone.**

41 [(14)] (16) "Speech-language pathologist" means a person who has a master's degree or equiv-
42 alency in speech-language pathology and a Certificate of Clinical Competence issued by the Ameri-
43 can Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

44 [(15)] (17) "Telecommunications relay center" means a facility authorized by the Public Utility
45 Commission to provide telecommunications relay service.

1 [(16)] (18) "Telecommunications relay service" means the provision of voice and teletype com-
 2 munication between users of some assistive telecommunication devices and other parties.

3 **SECTION 2.** Section 10, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, as amended by section 3, chapter 872,
 4 Oregon Laws 1991, section 2, chapter 384, Oregon Laws 1999, and section 354, chapter 70, Oregon
 5 Laws 2007, is amended to read:

6 **Sec. 10.** It is recognized that a large number of people in this state, through no fault of their
 7 own, are unable to utilize telecommunication equipment due to the inability to hear or speak well
 8 enough or due to other disabilities. It is also recognized that present technology is available, but
 9 at significant cost, that would allow these people to utilize telecommunication equipment in their
 10 daily activities. There is, therefore, a need to make available such technology in the form of
 11 assistive telecommunication devices and a telecommunications relay service for people who are deaf,
 12 [severely] hard of hearing or [severely] speech impaired or adaptive equipment for people with disa-
 13 bilities at no additional cost beyond normal telephone service. The provision of assistive telecom-
 14 munication devices and a telecommunications relay service or adaptive equipment would allow those
 15 formerly unable to use telecommunication systems to more fully participate in the activities and
 16 programs offered by government and other community agencies, as well as in their family and social
 17 activities. The assistive telecommunication devices or adaptive equipment would be provided on a
 18 loan basis to each recipient, to be returned if the recipient moves out of the state.

19 **SECTION 3.** Section 11, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, as amended by section 4, chapter 872,
 20 Oregon Laws 1991, section 3, chapter 384, Oregon Laws 1999, and section 355, chapter 70, Oregon
 21 Laws 2007, is amended to read:

22 **Sec. 11.** (1) With the advice of the Telecommunication Devices Access Program Advisory Com-
 23 mittee, the Public Utility Commission shall establish and administer a statewide program to pur-
 24 chase and distribute assistive telecommunication devices to persons who are deaf, [severely] hard
 25 of hearing, [severely] speech impaired or deaf-blind and establish a dual party relay system making
 26 telephone service generally available to persons who are deaf, [severely] hard of hearing, [severely]
 27 speech impaired or deaf-blind.

28 (2) With the advice of the Telecommunication Devices Access Program Advisory Committee, the
 29 Public Utility Commission shall establish and administer a statewide program to purchase and dis-
 30 tribute adaptive equipment to make telephone service generally available to persons with physical
 31 disabilities.

32 **SECTION 4.** Section 14, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, as amended by section 1, chapter 115,
 33 Oregon Laws 1989, section 7, chapter 872, Oregon Laws 1991, section 33, chapter 280, Oregon Laws
 34 1995, section 5, chapter 384, Oregon Laws 1999, section 2, chapter 28, Oregon Laws 2007, and sec-
 35 tion 357, chapter 70, Oregon Laws 2007, is amended to read:

36 **Sec. 14.** (1)(a) In order to be eligible to receive assistive telecommunication devices or adaptive
 37 equipment, individuals must be certified as deaf, [severely] hard of hearing, [severely] speech impaired
 38 or deaf-blind by a licensed physician, **nurse practitioner**, audiologist, hearing aid specialist,
 39 speech-language pathologist, **rehabilitation instructor for persons who are blind** or vocational
 40 rehabilitation counselor of the Department of Human Services. Certification implies that the indi-
 41 vidual cannot use the telephone for expressive or receptive communication.

42 (b) No more than one assistive telecommunication device or adaptive equipment device [shall]
 43 **may** be provided to a household. However, two assistive telecommunication devices or adaptive
 44 equipment devices may be provided to a household if more than one eligible person permanently
 45 resides in the household. Households without any assistive telecommunication devices or adaptive

1 equipment shall be given priority over households with one assistive telecommunication device or
2 adaptive equipment device when such devices are distributed.

3 (c) Sections 9 to 14, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, do not require a telecommunications utility
4 to provide an assistive telecommunication device to any person in violation of ORS 646.730.

5 (2)(a) In order to be eligible to receive adaptive equipment, individuals must be certified to have
6 the required disability by a person or agency designated by the Public Utility Commission to make
7 such certifications. Certification implies that the individual is unable to use the telephone.

8 (b) Sections 9 to 14, chapter 290, Oregon Laws 1987, do not require a telecommunications utility
9 to provide adaptive equipment to any person in violation of ORS 646.730.

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