



CHAMBER ACTION

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The Committee on State Administration recommends the following:

**Committee Substitute**

Remove the entire bill and insert:

A bill to be entitled to  
An act relating to the Florida Council on Deafness;  
creating the Florida Council on Deafness; providing  
membership and organization of the council; providing  
role, purpose, powers, duties, and responsibilities of the  
council; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Florida Council on Deafness.--

(1)(a) There is established the Florida Council on Deafness. The council is assigned to the Department of Education for administrative and fiscal purposes, but it shall otherwise function independently of the control, supervision, and direction of the Department of Education.

(b) The council shall consist of 9 members appointed by the Governor, after consultation with statewide not-for-profit professional organizations that represent deaf, hard-of-hearing,



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29 and late-deafened individuals, which members shall be confirmed  
30 by the Senate. The Governor shall make appointments to the  
31 council no later than July 1, 2003. Each member shall serve a  
32 term of 4 years; however, for the purpose of providing staggered  
33 terms, of the initial appointments, five members shall be  
34 appointed to a 2-year term and four members shall be appointed  
35 to a 4-year term. Any vacancy on the council shall be filled in  
36 the same manner as the original appointment, and any member  
37 appointed to fill a vacancy occurring because of death,  
38 resignation, or ineligibility for membership shall serve only  
39 for the unexpired term of the member's predecessor.

40 (c) The first meeting of the council shall be held no  
41 later than August 1, 2003. The council members, at the  
42 organizational meeting, shall elect by a majority vote of the  
43 members one member to serve as chair of the council for a term  
44 of 1 year. The council shall meet at least once each quarter.  
45 All meetings are subject to the call of the chair. Five members  
46 of the council shall constitute a quorum.

47 (d) Members of the council shall serve without  
48 compensation but may be reimbursed for per diem and travel  
49 expenses pursuant to section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

50 (e) Staff of the Department of Education shall be assigned  
51 by the Commissioner of Education to assist the council in the  
52 duties assigned to it by this section.

53 (2) It shall be the role of the council to serve as an  
54 advisory and coordinating body in the state that recommends  
55 policies that address the needs of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and  
56 late-deafened persons and that recommends methods that improve



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57 | the coordination of services among the public and private  
58 | entities that provide services to deaf, hard-of-hearing, and  
59 | late-deafened persons. The council is authorized to provide  
60 | technical assistance, advocacy, and education. To that end, the  
61 | council shall:

62 |     (a) Provide information and assistance to the Legislature.

63 |     (b) Provide technical assistance to other state agencies.

64 |     (c) Provide information and referral services.

65 |     (d) Promote public and individual advocacy for deaf, hard-  
66 | of-hearing, and late-deafened citizens.

67 |     (e) Conduct public hearings as needed.

68 |     (3) The council shall prepare a report, which shall be  
69 | filed with the Governor, the President of the Senate, the  
70 | Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Chief Justice of  
71 | the Supreme Court by January 1, 2004, which shall include:

72 |         (a) A review of state agencies to determine if they are in  
73 | compliance with accessibility standards as they relate to  
74 | services for deaf, hard-of-hearing, and late-deafened  
75 | individuals.

76 |         (b) A review of federal and state statutes, rules, and  
77 | regulations that establish requirements with which agencies must  
78 | comply, including, but not limited to, equipment and  
79 | communication accessibility standards in the provision of  
80 | services to deaf, hard-of-hearing, and late-deafened  
81 | individuals.

82 |         (c) A comparison of the licensure and accreditation  
83 | requirements for sign-language interpreters, oral interpreters,  
84 | and entities providing services, both directly and indirectly,



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85 to individuals with hearing loss among the ten most populous  
86 states.

87 (d) Recommendations for standards for and licensure of  
88 sign-language interpreters and providers of Computer-Aided Real-  
89 time Translation services (CART) and other service provider  
90 accreditation standards.

91 (4) The council may:

92 (a) Secure assistance from all state departments and  
93 agencies in order to avail itself of expertise at minimal cost.

94 (b) Obtain information and assistance from the state or  
95 any political subdivision, municipal corporation, public  
96 officer, or governmental department or agency thereof.

97 (c) Apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts, and  
98 services from local or state government or the Federal  
99 Government, or from any of their agencies, or any other public  
100 or private source, and use funds for the purposes authorized by  
101 this section.

102 (5) All executive branch state agencies are instructed,  
103 and all other state agencies are requested, to aid and assist  
104 the council in the accomplishment of its purposes.

105 (6) Nothing in this act is intended to or shall be  
106 interpreted as extending the duties or responsibilities of the  
107 council to any program, service, or activity which is subject to  
108 the jurisdiction or oversight of the Public Service Commission.

109 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.

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