AGN. NO.

REVISED MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL September 30, 2025

Fostering Inclusivity Through Closed Captioning in Los Angeles County

Los Angeles County (County) recognizes the importance of inclusive communication and equal access to information for all residents and visitors. The County is home to a significant population of individuals who are D/deaf or hard of hearing, as well as diverse communities of English language learners, and many neurodivergent individuals, including those with Autism, who benefit from captioning.

According to the non-profit organization, HEAR Center, over 800,000 individuals with some level of hearing loss reside in Greater Los Angeles and its surrounding counties[1]. Additionally, one-third of all individuals with autism in California live in the County.[2]

Extensive research shows that closed captioning on screens improves comprehension, attention, and memory for viewers of all ages and abilities.[3] Captions are particularly beneficial for people who are D/deaf or hard of hearing, English language learners, children and adults developing literacy skills, and those in noisy public

[1] https://www.hearcenter.org/how-many-californians-are-affected-by-hearing-loss/
[2] https://www.autismla.org/1/
[3] https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5214590/

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environments.[4] These benefits extend beyond the D/deaf and hard of hearing communities to the general public.

Despite federal laws requiring captioning[5] in many contexts, this essential accessibility feature often remains deactivated on televisions in public spaces, creating unnecessary barriers to information access. Since 1993, all television sets with screens 13 inches or larger sold in the United States have included the capability to activate closed captioning.[6]

Several jurisdictions, including Washington State, San Francisco, Portland, Rochester, Boston, and the City of Los Angeles, have successfully implemented or are in the process of implementing closed captioning requirements for public facilities with an emphasis on education and compliance rather than punishment.

Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity of our D/deaf and hard of hearing communities should be a standard that the County continually strives to uphold. By adopting a phased ordinance requiring public spaces to activate closed captioning, we move closer to meeting this standard.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Interim Director of the Department of Aging & Disabilities (AD), in consultation with the Commission on Disabilities and directors of any other relevant agencies or departments, including the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), and County Counsel, to report back in writing within 90 days with a draft Closed Captioning ordinance and proposed implementation plan ~~and~~ for Los Angeles County (County) to adopt ~~a Closed Captioning ordinance~~ in the unincorporated areas of the County. The report back should include ~~discuss, at a minimum: a.~~ clear definitions of key terms and reasonable exceptions.

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4 Ibid 3

5 https://www.ada.gov/law-and-regs/regulations/title-iii- regulations/

6 https://www.hearingloss.org/find-help/captioning/

~~a. An implementation plan for an educational campaign to encourage public facilities and businesses in the unincorporated areas of the County to activate closed captioning on televisions located in public spaces; and~~

~~b. An implementation plan for enacting an ordinance requiring public facilities and businesses in the unincorporated areas of the County to activate closed captioning on televisions located in public spaces.~~

2. Direct the Interim Director of AD, in consultation with the Director of DEO, to develop informational and educational campaign materials that promote the activation of closed captioning on televisions in public spaces within public facilities and businesses located in the unincorporated areas of the County, with materials available in threshold languages; and report back in writing within 90 days with details on the campaign's content, scope, and proposed timeline.
3. Direct the Director of DEO, in consultation with the Interim Director of AD, to identify key partners and convene stakeholder engagement efforts with representatives from the business community prior to the adoption of any ordinance.

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(EA/YV)