

## **Resolution in Support of Closed Captioning on Televisions in Public Areas**

WHEREAS, hearing loss is a significant problem in the United States. A study released in 2011 by researchers at Johns Hopkins estimated that approximately one in five Americans have some type of hearing loss in one or both ears that affect their ability to communicate and receive information; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission and Congress, commencing in 1993, have enacted various laws establishing closed captioning requirements for television receivers and video program distributors; and

WHEREAS, closed captioning consists of a transcript of the audio portions of television programming displayed on the television receiver screen when the user activates the caption feature; and

WHEREAS, television receivers are increasingly used in facilities open to the general public, including hospital and medical facility waiting rooms, bars and restaurants, health clubs, and appliance stores. These and other public facilities represent the kinds of locations where the general public has access to television programming; and

WHEREAS, television receivers in these locations enable members of the general public to obtain the latest news reports in an emergency, watch local sports teams, or simply pass the time while waiting for an appointment or service to be completed. People with hearing disabilities should not be excluded from being able to meaningfully participate in these activities while in public areas; and

WHEREAS, in order to avoid screening out those members of the general public who are deaf or hard of hearing in places of public accommodation, closed captioning should be activated so as to not exclude, deny service, segregate or otherwise treat those with hearing disabilities differently from being able to fully participate in or experience the full benefits of the television programming offered to the public in those settings; and

WHEREAS, the Jacksonville Community Center for the Deaf has established an Open Communications Movement Ad Hoc Committee (OCM Committee) to provide open, informative communications within all communities; and

WHEREAS, as part of its charge, the OCM Committee has instituted a program to educate the public as to the benefits and fairness of activating closed captioning in places of public accommodation in Jacksonville to serve the more than 400 deaf and hard of hearing residents of Jacksonville, along with deaf and hard of hearing visitors to Jacksonville and the student population at the Illinois School for the Deaf; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Jacksonville wishes to express its strong support for the efforts of the OCM Committee in working with the Jacksonville businesses to activate closed captioning on TVs in places of public accommodation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City of Jacksonville expresses its strong support for the efforts of the OCM Committee to accomplish the activation of closed captioning on TVs in Jacksonville businesses, and encourages all places of public accommodation in the City of Jacksonville to activate closed captioning on their televisions, in furtherance of the OCM Committee efforts.

Passed and Approved . . .