

1669--A

Cal. No. 231

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N A S S E M B L Y

January 12, 2015

Introduced by M. of A. WRIGHT, RODRIGUEZ, PERRY -- Multi-Sponsored by --
M. of A. FARRELL -- read once and referred to the Committee on
Governmental Operations -- reported and referred to the Committee on
Ways and Means -- advanced to a third reading, amended and ordered
reprinted, retaining its place on the order of third reading

AN ACT to amend the public officers law, in relation to the accessibil-
ity of public hearings and meetings

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEM-
BLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Section 74-a of the public officers law, as added by chap-
2 ter 368 of the laws of 1977, is amended to read as follows:
3 S 74-a. Duty of public officers regarding [the physically hand-
4 icapped] ACCESSIBILITY. 1. It shall be the duty of each public officer
5 responsible for the scheduling or siting of any public hearing to make
6 reasonable efforts to ensure (A) that such hearings are held in facili-
7 ties that permit barrier-free physical access to the physically hand-
8 icapped, as defined in subdivision five of section fifty of the public
9 buildings law; AND (B) THAT SERVICES OF A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER, IF
10 AVAILABLE, ARE PROVIDED AT SUCH PUBLIC HEARINGS AT NO CHARGE TO PERSONS
11 WHO ARE HEARING IMPAIRED UPON WRITTEN REQUEST TO THE PUBLIC OFFICER
12 RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SCHEDULING OR SITING OF THE PUBLIC HEARING WITHIN A
13 REASONABLE TIME PRIOR TO SUCH HEARING. IF INTERPRETER SERVICES ARE
14 REQUESTED, THE PUBLIC OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SCHEDULING OR SITING
15 OF THE PUBLIC HEARING SHALL ENGAGE THE SERVICES OF A QUALIFIED INTER-
16 PRETER, IF AVAILABLE, TO INTERPRET THE PROCEEDING TO, AND THE TESTIMONY
17 OF SUCH PERSONS WHO ARE HEARING IMPAIRED; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH
18 ACTION DOES NOT IMPOSE AN UNDUE HARDSHIP ON THE PUBLIC BODY HOLDING SUCH
19 HEARING.
20 2. (A) ON AND AFTER JANUARY FIRST, TWO THOUSAND EIGHTEEN, SUCH PUBLIC
21 OFFICERS SHALL HAVE THE POWER AND IT SHALL BE THEIR INDIVIDUAL DUTY TO
22 EQUIP ANY ROOMS USED FOR PUBLIC HEARINGS WHICH ACCOMMODATE MORE THAN ONE

EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 HUNDRED PERSONS WITH AN ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM FOR USE BY THE HEAR-
2 ING IMPAIRED; PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH ACTION DOES NOT IMPOSE AN
3 UNDUE HARDSHIP ON THE PUBLIC BODY EQUIPPING SUCH ROOMS.

4 (B) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SUBDIVISION, THE TERM "ASSISTIVE LISTENING
5 SYSTEM" SHALL MEAN SITUATIONAL-PERSONAL ACOUSTIC COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT
6 DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE TRANSMISSION AND AUDITORY RECEPTION OF SOUND.
7 SUCH SYSTEM SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO THE USE OF STANDARD
8 AMPLITUDE MODULATION (AM), FREQUENCY MODULATION (FM), AUDIO INDUCTION
9 LOOP, INFRARED LIGHT SOUND, OR HARD WIRE SYSTEMS.

10 S 2. Subdivision (d) of section 103 of the public officers law, as
11 added by chapter 40 of the laws of 2010, is relettered subdivision (f)
12 and two new subdivisions (g) and (h) are added to read as follows:

13 (G) PUBLIC BODIES SHALL MAKE OR CAUSE TO BE MADE ALL REASONABLE
14 EFFORTS TO ENSURE THAT SERVICES OF A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER, IF AVAIL-
15 ABLE, ARE PROVIDED AT MEETINGS AT NO CHARGE TO PERSONS WHO ARE HEARING
16 IMPAIRED UPON WRITTEN REQUEST TO THE PUBLIC BODY WITHIN A REASONABLE
17 TIME PRIOR TO SUCH MEETING. IF INTERPRETER SERVICES ARE REQUESTED, THE
18 PUBLIC BODY SHALL ENGAGE THE SERVICES OF A QUALIFIED INTERPRETER, IF
19 AVAILABLE, TO INTERPRET THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING; PROVIDED, HOWEV-
20 ER, THAT SUCH ACTION DOES NOT IMPOSE AN UNDUE HARDSHIP ON THE PUBLIC
21 BODY HOLDING SUCH MEETING.

22 (H) (1) ON AND AFTER JANUARY FIRST, TWO THOUSAND EIGHTEEN, PUBLIC
23 BODIES SHALL HAVE THE POWER AND IT SHALL BE THEIR COLLECTIVE DUTY TO
24 EQUIP MEETING ROOMS WHICH ACCOMMODATE MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED PERSONS WITH
25 AN ASSISTIVE LISTENING SYSTEM FOR USE BY THE HEARING IMPAIRED; PROVIDED,
26 HOWEVER, THAT SUCH ACTION DOES NOT IMPOSE AN UNDUE HARDSHIP ON THE
27 PUBLIC BODY EQUIPPING SUCH ROOMS.

28 (2) FOR PURPOSES OF THIS SECTION, THE TERM "ASSISTIVE LISTENING
29 SYSTEM" SHALL MEAN SITUATIONAL-PERSONAL ACOUSTIC COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT
30 DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE TRANSMISSION AND AUDITORY RECEPTION OF SOUND.
31 SUCH SYSTEM SHALL INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO THE USE OF STANDARD
32 AMPLITUDE MODULATION (AM), FREQUENCY MODULATION (FM), AUDIO INDUCTION
33 LOOP, INFRARED LIGHT SOUND, OR HARD WIRE SYSTEMS.

34 S 3. This act shall take effect January 1, 2017.