STATE OF NEW YORK

10366

IN ASSEMBLY

May 21, 2024

Introduced by COMMITTEE ON RULES -- (at request of M. of A. Lavine) -- read once and referred to the Committee on Governmental Operations

AN ACT to amend the executive law, in relation to requiring the state interagency coordinating council for services to persons who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing to develop and implement a training program to educate first responders on effective communication with deaf and hard of hearing individuals in emergency situations

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. Short title. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "deaf and hard of hearing emergency communications act".

§ 2. Section 559 of the executive law is amended by adding a new subdivision 6 to read as follows:

6. The state interagency coordinating council for services to persons who are deaf, deaf-blind, or hard of hearing shall, in collaboration with the department of health, develop and implement a comprehensive language access training program for first responders, designed to educate first responders on strategies to communicate effectively with deaf and hard of hearing individuals in emergency situations. In addition to developing and implementing such language access training program, the state interagency coordinating council shall:

(a) create and distribute informational materials, including but not limited to brochures or pamphlets, to educate the general public on how to communicate effectively with deaf and hard of hearing individuals during emergencies;

(b) establish a system to allow deaf and hard of hearing individuals to provide feedback on their experiences with first responders and to suggest potential improvements to the language access training program;

(c) conduct regular reviews and evaluations of the effectiveness of the language access training program for first responders and any necessary changes to the program to ensure its ongoing improvement;

(d) develop and implement a system for tracking and documenting incidents involving deaf and hard of hearing individuals to identify trends, challenges, and areas for improvement; and

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

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(e) establish a protocol for dispatch centers to efficiently identify and relay information about a deaf or hard of hearing individual's communication preferences to responding first responders.

§ 3. This act shall take effect immediately.