

Approved: February 9, 1996  
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MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alicia Salisbury at 8:00 a.m. on February 8, 1996 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

Members present: Senators Salisbury, Downey, Feleciano, Gooch, Harris, Hensley, Jordan, Petty, Ranson, Reynolds, Steffes and Vidricksen.

Committee staff present: Jerry Donaldson, Legislative Research Department  
Bob Nugent, Revisor of Statutes  
Betty Bomar, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:  
Michael Byington, Wichita Industries & Services for the Blind  
Tom Bell, Kansas Hospital Association

Others attending: See attached list

Upon motion by Senator Jordan, seconded by Senator Reynolds, the Minutes of the February 7, 1996 meeting were unanimously approved.

**SB 555:                      Establishing end-user support fund**

Michael Byington, Wichita Industries & Services for the Blind (WISB), testified in favor of SB 555. Mr. Byington stated WISB requests an amendment in Section 1, line 19, following the word "services" to add the words "and adaptive equipment". Mr. Byington stated individuals who are sight impaired have specialized for the adaptive equipment that prints out information in various forms such as speaking or Braille. Attachment 1

In response to the Chairman's question, Mr. Byington stated he understands the financing mechanism for the end-user support fund proposed in SB 555 and has no disagreement with a surcharge.

Tom Bell, Kansas Hospital Association, referred to written testimony submitted to the Committee at its February 7, 1996 meeting. Mr. Bell testified the Association supports the bill. The Association is concerned about the charges associated with the use of telemedicine equipment. The ongoing costs could be more onerous than the cost of the equipment itself. Neither the costs of the equipment nor the ongoing costs are considered reimbursable by health insurance companies. This legislation does provide a vehicle to help make needed health care services available in areas where access is a problem.

The Committee agreed providing telecommunication services to all Kansans is a goal to which it aspires. However, there was no consensus regarding the manner of paying for the services.

The Chair appointed a telecommunications subcommittee consisting of the following: Senator Salisbury, Chair; Senators Vidricksen, Steffes, Downey and Feleciano. The Chair announced the subcommittee would meet at 8:00 a.m., Friday, February 16, 1996, in Room 123-S.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled February 9, 1996.

# SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 8, 1996

NAME	REPRESENTING
Tom DAI	KCC
DAVID SCHLOSSER	PETE MCGILL & ASSOC.
Scott Richardson	SWBT
BUD GRANT	KCL
Anne Humphrey	Ks. Hospital Association
Tom Bell	WU
WALKER HENDRIX	KHA
Michael Brington	CURB
Mike Sweet	Wichita Industries + Services for the Blind.
Rob Hodges	AT&T
Roger Vonfeldt	KVA
JOHN PITSENBERGER	Rural Telephone Service Co.
James A Ladd	BRAD SMOOT
John D. Pingan	KS77A
George Barber	SITA
Eve Pommers	RTAC
DENNY KOCH	MLI
STEVE KEARNEY	SW Res TEL
	KINI L.C.

# SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME	REPRESENTING
Denise Slenauer	SWSB
Julia Hein	Classic Communications
Roger Franke	KGC

WICHITA INDUSTRIES & SERVICES FOR THE BLIND, INC.

February 6, 1996

TO: Senate Commerce Committee

REPLY TO: Michael Byington  
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Topeka, Kansas 66601  
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SUBJECT: S 555

We rise in support of this Legislation. We want to thank the Committee for including the finance of telecommunications services for Kansans with special needs among the items the end user fund will support. We have been advocating before several committees of the Legislature this session that "universal access" must include the concept of full access and usability of equipment by persons having disabilities. This legislation represents the first evidence we have seen that our concerns on this subject are being considered.

We would, however, strongly recommend an amendment. The issue is often not so much that Kansans who have special needs require unique or specialized telecommunications services. Equally or more often the need is for specialized adaptive equipment so that Kansans who have special needs, including Kansans who are blind, visually impaired, or otherwise disabled can have independent access to the same telecommunications services which are needed by or used by other segments of the general population. We would thus request that the words, "and adaptive equipment" be added between the words "telecommunications services" and the word "for."

Thank you for your work on this legislation. Access to telecommunications and the information available therethrough will be essential in order for persons having disabilities to be able to live and work independently in the near future and from now on.

A not-for-profit  
agency providing  
employment &  
services to people  
who are blind.

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1 February 8, 1996

*Attachment 1*

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