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**SENATE BILL 5486**

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**State of Washington 69th Legislature 2025 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Orwall, Dhingra, Nobles, and Trudeau

AN ACT Relating to open motion picture captioning in motion picture theaters; adding a new section to chapter 49.60 RCW; prescribing penalties; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  A new section is added to chapter 49.60 RCW to read as follows:

(1) A place of public accommodation that is a motion picture theater shall provide access to fully operational and well–maintained closed motion picture captioning technology for the general public for each screening of a motion picture that is produced and available with closed motion picture captioning as required by Title III of the federal Americans with disabilities act.

(2) A place of public accommodation that controls, operates, owns, or leases a motion picture theater with six or more screens in the state shall, for each motion picture it screens that is produced and available with open captioning, provide open captioning for at least two screenings of the motion picture within each of the first two weeks of the motion picture's release.

(a) At least one open-captioned screening must take place during peak weekend hours. For purposes of this subsection (2)(a), "peak weekend hours" means between 5:59 p.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Fridays or between 10:59 a.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Saturdays or Sundays.

(b) After the first two weeks of a motion picture's release, at least one weekly screening must be open-captioned and screened during peak hours. For purposes of this subsection (2)(b), "peak hours" means between 5:59 p.m. and 10:01 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays; between 5:59 p.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Fridays; or between 10:59 a.m. and 11:01 p.m. on Saturdays or Sundays.

(3) A motion picture theater with five or fewer screens must:

(a) Provide an open-captioned screening within 72 hours after receiving a request; or

(b) Offer open captioning consistent with the requirements for theaters with six or more screens.

(4) Motion picture theaters shall provide contact information on their websites for the purposes of fulfilling requests for open-captioned screenings.

(5) A screening of a motion picture with open captioning that overlaps with another screening of a motion picture with open captioning may not be counted toward the minimum number of screenings required by this section, except where it is not practicable to avoid such overlap.

(6) A motion picture theater shall advertise the date and time of open-captioned screenings required by this section in the same manner as the motion picture theater advertises all other motion picture screenings and indicate which screenings will include open captioning.

(7) A motion picture theater shall maintain documents sufficient to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this section for a period of at least one year.

(8) A motion picture theater that fails to comply with the requirements of this section is subject to a civil fine of up to $100 for each violation. Written notice of the violation must be provided to the motion picture theater and must state that the fine will be assessed. The notice must also state that the motion picture theater may cure the violation by complying with the requirement within 30 days after delivery of the notice. If the motion picture theater demonstrates compliance within the 30-day period, the fine may not be assessed and the violation must be dismissed. Any subsequent violation results in a civil fine of up to $500.

(9) The human rights commission must prepare an educational pamphlet advising motion picture theaters of their duty and liability under this section. The pamphlet must clarify the differences between closed captioning and open captioning and how motion picture theaters should advertise open-captioned screenings. The pamphlet should be made available online.

(10) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Closed captioning" means a transcript or dialogue of the audio portion of a motion picture that is displayed on either the bottom or top portion of a motion picture screen.

(b) "Motion picture theater" means an establishment in which feature motion pictures are regularly exhibited to the public for an admission charge.

(c) "Open captioning" means the written, on-screen display of a motion picture's dialogue and nonspeech information, which may include music, the identity of the character speaking, or other sounds and sound effects.

NEW SECTION. **Sec.**  This act takes effect January 1, 2026.

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