Session of 2025

SENATE BILL No. 46

By Senator Ware

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AN ACT concerning disability services; relating to telecommunications and information access services; establishing the blind information access act; requiring the state librarian to contract with an organization to provide on-demand information access services to persons who are blind, visually impaired, deafblind or print disabled; establishing the blind information access fund; requiring the transfer of moneys from the Kansas universal service fund to provide for such services; amending K.S.A. 66-2010 and repealing the existing section.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

New Section 1. (a) This act shall be known and may be cited as the blind information access act.

(b) The state librarian shall estimate the cost of entering into a contract with an organization that delivers on-demand information access services to persons who are blind, visually impaired, deafblind or print disabled. Such services shall provide access to digital content through audio, electronic text and braille-reading technologies and other related services, including, but not limited to, Kansas specific publications, national publications, international publications, breaking news sources and localized emergency weather alerts. Such on-demand information access services shall be provided using telecommunications or internet services.

(c) On or before November 1 of each year, the state librarian shall submit a report to the legislature and the state corporation commission that specifies the estimate of the cost to enter into a contract to provide such on-demand information access services and shall certify such cost to the director of accounts and reports and the administrator of the Kansas universal service fund. Upon receipt of such certification, the total amount certified shall be transferred by the administrator of the Kansas universal service fund from the Kansas universal service fund to the state treasurer in the following calendar year by 12 equal monthly installment payments. Upon receipt of each such payment, the state treasurer shall deposit such amount in the state treasury and credit such amount to the blind information access fund.

(d) Upon receipt of the amount certified pursuant to subsection (c), the state librarian shall enter into or renew the contract required pursuant

to this section.

(e) There is hereby created in the state treasury the blind information access fund. All moneys credited to the blind information access fund shall be used by the state librarian to implement the provisions of this section. All expenditures from the blind information access fund shall be made in accordance with appropriation acts upon warrants of the director of accounts and reports issued pursuant to vouchers approved by the state librarian or the state librarian's designee.

(f) The state librarian shall promote the information access services to persons who may be eligible for such services.

Sec. 2. K.S.A. 66-2010 is hereby amended to read as follows: 66-2010. (a) The commission shall utilize a competitive bidding process to select a neutral, competent and bonded third party to administer the KUSF.

(b) The administrator shall be responsible for: (1) Collecting and auditing all relevant information from all qualifying telecommunications public utilities, telecommunications carriers or wireless telecommunications service providers receiving funds from or providing funds to the KUSF; (2) verifying, based on the calculations of each qualifying telecommunications carrier, telecommunications public utility or wireless telecommunications service provider, the obligation of each such qualifying carrier, utility or provider to generate the funds required by the KUSF; (3) collecting all moneys due to the KUSF from all telecommunications public utilities, telecommunications carriers and wireless telecommunications service providers in the state; and (4) distributing amounts on a monthly basis due to qualifying telecommunications public utilities, wireless telecommunications service providers and telecommunications carriers receiving KUSF funding.

(c) Any information made available or received by the administrator from carriers, utilities or providers receiving funds from or providing funds to the KUSF shall not be subject to any provisions of the ~~Kansas~~ open records act and shall be considered confidential and proprietary.

(d) The administrator shall be authorized to maintain an action to collect any funds owed by any telecommunications carrier, public utility or wireless telecommunications provider in the district court in the county of the registered office of such carrier, utility or provider or, if such carrier, utility or provider does not have a registered office in the state, such an action may be maintained in the county where such carrier's, utility's or provider's principal office is located. If such carrier, utility or provider has no principal office in the state, such an action may be maintained in the district court of any county in which such carrier, utility or provider provides service.

(e) (1) The KUSF administrator shall be responsible ~~to ensure~~ *for ensuring* that funds do not fall below the level necessary to pay all

amounts collectively owed to all qualifying telecommunications public utilities, wireless telecommunications service providers ~~and~~, telecommunications carriers *and the information access services contracted for pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto*. The administrator shall have the authority to retain and invest in a prudent and reasonable manner any excess funds collected in any period to help ensure that adequate funds are available to cover amounts payable in other periods.

~~(2) Subject to the provisions of appropriations acts, for fiscal year 2013, the KUSF administrator may transfer moneys from the KUSF to the state treasurer. Upon the receipt of any payment, the state treasurer shall deposit the entire amount in the state treasury and credit it to the KAN-ED fund. Any such payments shall be made after all payments required by K.S.A. 66-2008, and amendments thereto, for the month are made from the KUSF.~~

(2) Upon receipt of the certification from the state librarian issued pursuant to section 1, and amendments thereto, the KUSF administrator shall transfer the total amount of moneys certified by the state librarian from the KUSF to the state treasurer in the following calendar year by 12 equal monthly installment payments. Upon receipt of each such payment, the state treasurer shall deposit such amount in the state treasury and credit such amount to the blind information access fund.

Sec. 3. K.S.A. 66-2010 is hereby repealed.

Sec. 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.