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Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham
490 Old Santa Fe Trail Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

March 23, 2025

Re: NM HB 49 – Closed Captioning Act

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

On behalf of the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA), I am pleased to offer our enthusiastic support for New Mexico House Bill 49, the Closed Captioning Act. This legislation is a commendable advancement toward ensuring equal access to places of public accommodation for all New Mexicans, particularly those who depend on accurate and reliable captioning to fully participate in public life.

Certified professional captioners play an essential role in delivering high-quality, precise captions that enable individuals — whether members of the deaf and hard-of-hearing communities or others who benefit from this service — to engage with motion pictures, live events, and other offerings in public venues. These skilled professionals are trained to capture dialogue, sound effects, and contextual details with exceptional accuracy, ensuring an inclusive experience that upholds the principles of accessibility and equality. Their expertise is vital to meeting the diverse needs of the public and fostering an environment where all can participate without barriers.

In contrast, automatically generated captioning systems, while technologically convenient, are demonstrably ineffective in providing the same level of access. These systems frequently produce errors, misinterpret speech, and fail to convey critical auditory elements such as tone, overlapping dialogue, or ambient sounds. Such shortcomings diminish the experience for all users and disproportionately impact those who rely on captions, undermining the goal of equal accommodation. HB 49's focus on effective captioning solutions recognizes the superiority of professional standards over automated alternatives, and we applaud this forward-thinking approach.

NCRA stands firmly behind the Closed Captioning Act and encourages your support for its passage. To deepen your understanding of its benefits and the pivotal role of certified captioners, I invite you to connect with our Government Relations Department. We are eager to share additional insights and resources to support your deliberations. Furthermore, our captioner members in New Mexico are available to meet with you, offering firsthand perspectives on how their work promotes accessibility and equity across the state.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to enhancing the lives of all New Mexicans. We look forward to partnering with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Keith Lemons

Keith R. Lemons, FAPR, RPR, CRR (Ret.)
President, National Court Reporters Association