



# Take Action

**Welcome to the newly revitalized PAC monthly newsletter!** NCRA's Government Relations team believes that it is of the utmost importance that the court reporting and captioning community stays informed about state and federal legislative developments in the profession. Here you will find the most up-to-date information about legislative and regulatory happenings that affect what you do as well as information about what you need to do to be active and engaged in protecting your profession.

NCRA's Government Relations team works around the clock to monitor potential legislation that affects court reporting and captioning, and to educate lawmakers about the profession and why they should protect it. Grassroots advocacy is the most important tool to accomplish this. Legislators must respond to the will of the people; the more people tell their legislators what that will is, the more likely lawmakers will act on that will. For more information about how your Government Relations team can help you advocate for the court reporting and captioning professions in your state, contact Matthew Barusch, State Government Relations Manager, at [mbarusch@ncra.org](mailto:mbarusch@ncra.org).

## State of the Nation

The 115th Congress officially convened on Jan. 3, and Donald Trump has officially taken the Oath of Office as the 45th President of the United States. For the first time in 10 years, the nation has a unified government, where the same party controls the White House and both chambers of Congress. Now that the chambers have organized and held their internal elections, much of Congress' attention will go toward confirming President Trump's cabinet nominations and achieving long awaited rollbacks of Obama administration policies.

The first legislative agenda item of the Trump administration is to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, which has already been addressed through executive order. The president has issued other executive orders dealing with the Trans Pacific Partnership, the proposed border wall, the Dakota and Keystone pipelines, and immigration travel restrictions, all of which follow through with promises made during his campaign. President Trump has also nominated his pick for the Supreme Court vacancy: Judge Neil Gorsuch of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit. Sixty votes in the Senate are needed to confirm a Supreme Court nominee, and Judge Gorsuch will face a resistant Senate minority. Time will tell whether Senate Republicans will employ the "nuclear option," which allows for confirmation with a simple majority vote.

One of the issue areas not yet addressed by the Trump administration or the 115th Congress is education, where issues pertinent to the court reporting and captioning professions will likely take a backseat to the president's campaign pledges. Education Secretary nominee Betsy DeVos, a staunch advocate for charter schools and school choice, has been confirmed by the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committee, and her nomination now awaits a vote by the full Senate. NCRA's Government Relations team will continue to work hard to get these issues on lawmakers' radars.

## State of the States

The 2017 legislative session is officially underway. This year will prove to be a critical one for the court reporting and captioning professions with many different challenges from state to state. Forty-three states convened their legislatures during the month of January, with many considering issues pertaining to the court reporting and captioning professions. To stay up to date on all actions on bills in your state, click to see a full list of all [pending legislation](#).



## Minnesota

The **Minnesota** Judicial Council is currently considering a proposal from the State Court Administrator's Office on the implementation of electronic recording on a statewide basis. The Council reviewed presentations on the proposal and will be establishing a working group to address the issue. This working group will make a recommendation to the full Council, which will then vote on the proposal.



## Mississippi

The **Mississippi** Legislature will be considering H.B. 1215, which removes the prohibition from youth courts using court reporters in detention and shelter hearings. This bill, sponsored by Rep. David Baria, failed to pass a Jan. 31 committee deadline and is now dead.



## Missouri

Rep. Joe Don McGaugh has introduced H.B. 597, which repeals **Missouri** law that specified that court reporters shall receive \$3.50 per page in proceedings in any circuit court. The bill also states that the party requesting the production is no longer required to pay the cost of a court reporter to prepare transcripts of testimony and proceedings. A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate as S.B. 169, which was scheduled to be heard in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Jan. 30, but was not.



## Texas

The **Texas** Legislature is currently considering two measures dealing with shorthand-notes ownership and the reporter's record in family court suits. H.B. 663 requires shorthand notes to be delivered to the court clerk and states that those notes are the property of the court. This bill also states that the court clerk shall establish transcription fees, and allows the court to require the official court reporter to deliver a copy of the transcript to the clerk at no cost to the court. H.B. 688 establishes a 20-day deadline for a court reporter to submit the record of a family court trial after a notice of appeal is filed. Both measures await committee referrals.



## Wyoming

The **Wyoming** Legislature is currently considering anti-contracting legislation in the form of H.B. 143. This bill would prohibit court reporting service providers from establishing rates or terms that extend beyond a single case, fail to offer comparable services to all parties, or base compensation on the outcome of the case. This measure currently awaits consideration by the House Minerals, Business, and Economic Development Committee.

## 2017 PAC Fundraiser

NCRA's Political Action Committee is an important component of the Association's government relations efforts. Through PAC contributions, NCRA is able to cultivate relationships with lawmakers on Capitol Hill, which allows the Government Relations team to articulate the profession's priorities to elected officials, and forward the Association's legislative agenda in Congress. Without NCRA member contributions, these efforts would not be possible. PAC support gives NCRA members a voice in how the profession moves into the future. While many NCRA members are already ardent supporters, there are also many who have never contributed to the PAC because they don't know how their contributions help the profession. The Government Relations team is here to change that.

This year, NCRA is launching a yearlong fundraising effort based on a simple idea: if every one of the Association's 16,000 members contributed at least \$10 to the NCRA PAC during 2017, funds would more than triple while the ability to effectively advocate for the court reporting and captioning professions at the federal level would increase exponentially. Watch for future issues of this newsletter to stay informed about how your PAC contributions are being put to good use. Our next issue and subsequent issues will include a profile of an NCRA member who has supported the Association's PAC. If everyone participates, NCRA can accomplish some amazing things. Do your part, and [contribute](#) today!

National Court Reporters Association | 800-272-6272 | [msic@ncra.org](mailto:msic@ncra.org) | [NCRA.org](http://NCRA.org)

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