

March 10, 2017



Take Action

Hello, and welcome back to the PACTake Action newsletter! NCRA's Government Relations team takes pride in continuing to serve you and to help you stay informed about legislative developments in the court reporting 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.

The "Men of Court Reporting" calendar is back

NCRA PAC is excited to announce that the "Men of Court Reporting" calendar is back and will be better than ever with your help! You are invited to nominate the male of your choice for our August 2017-December 2018 "Men of Court Reporting" calendar.

Only NCRA members can nominate an individual for the calendar (use your member ID# and password). All nominees should be male and an NCRA member. [Nominations](#) will be accepted from March 10-24.

If you have any questions about this newsletter, NCRA PAC, or the calendar, please contact NCRA's Government Relations Manager Matthew Barusch at mbarusch@ncra.org

State of the Nation

This last month has been an eventful one in Washington. The Trump administration will propose a \$3.9 trillion budget this month. This budget features an historic \$54 billion in defense spending which represents a 10 percent increase from 2016 appropriations, large tax cuts, and budget cuts to many federal agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of State. President Trump gave his first address to a joint session of Congress and outlined his agenda for the coming year, which includes a school-choice education bill, immigration reform, and tax reform.

The 115th Congress continues to look at repealing and replacing the Affordable Care Act. Congressional Republicans have drafted a bill for potential ACA repeal, which includes a repeal of the individual mandate, offers refundable tax credits for low- and middle-income Americans to buy health insurance, and restructures the Medicaid program allowing states to receive a set amount of money from the federal government every year. The bill also keeps in place many original provisions of the Affordable Care Act, such as protections of individuals with pre-existing conditions and allowing children to stay on their parents' insurance plans until the age of 26. The legislative process has now only just begun, yet concerns regarding timing abound. Congress is eager to repeal but wary of doing so without a replacement plan going into effect simultaneously to avoid any dropped coverage for Americans under the current law.

In the education realm, the full Senate narrowly confirmed Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education. In an historic move, Vice President Mike Pence cast the final vote in favor of DeVos' confirmation after two Republican Senators stated that they could not support her. She will now lead the Department of Education, where she will pursue school-choice innovations in public education. No mention has been made of plans to encourage Congress to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, which would include a reauthorization of the Training for Realtime Writers Grant. This program provides grants for the recruitment, training and assistance, and job placement of individuals who have completed a court reporting training program as realtime writers, a program that NCRA staunchly supports and is working to bring awareness to in Congress.

In other education news, the Accrediting Council for Independent Colleges and Schools (ACICS) continues its legal fight to remain recognized as an accrediting organization of degree-granting institutions. ACICS, which accredited some schools that provide court reporting programs, was denied its motion for a preliminary injunction to halt the implementation of the Department of Education's Dec. 12, 2016, decision to withdraw ACICS's recognition as a national accreditation agency. The Court hearing the case has not yet set a trial date to begin reviewing the merits of the claim. DeVos, a supporter of for-profit schools, technically has the ability to restore ACICS. However, ACICS has now lost five consecutive rounds of decision-making in four different settings, making a reversal unlikely.

State of the States

As state governments picked up the legislative pace in February, multiple bills affecting court reporters have seen action. All 50 state governments are currently in session, and below is a brief overview of the progress court reporting legislation has made. To stay up to date on all actions on bills in your state, click to see a full list of all [pending legislation](#).



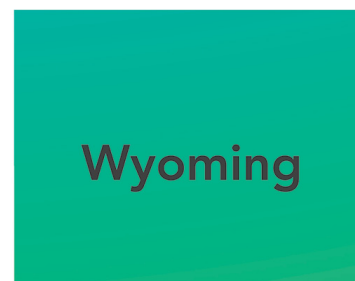
The **California** Legislature is considering A.B. 1450, which may require that all transcripts be delivered in electronic format to any court, party, or person entitled to the transcript. Existing law authorizes a court, party, or other person entitled to a transcript to request that it be delivered in computer-readable form; this legislation may require mandatory electronic filing. The bill awaits referral to a committee for consideration.



Massachusetts court reporters continue their fight against the proliferation of electronic recording. The Standing Advisory Committee on the Rules of Civil and Appellate Procedure is considering proposed amendments to MA Rules of Civil Procedure 30 and 30A, which would allow audio-visual depositions. Currently, audio-visual depositions can be taken only when the parties agree or when the party seeking the audio-visual deposition obtains a court order. These amendments would allow for audio-visual depositions to be taken in lieu of stenographic transcripts. The committee has solicited public comments, which NCRA and the Massachusetts Court Reporter Association have filed.



The **Minnesota** Judicial Council has formed a workgroup to examine and propose cost-effective and efficient ways to create and maintain the court record, including the following: ensure judicial branch control of the court record; examine if changes should be



The **Wyoming** Legislature considered 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

made in the manner in which transcripts are created; and develop priorities for which court proceedings should be created by an in-person and/or real time court reporter and those to be created through digital recording. This workgroup will make a recommendation to the full Minnesota Judicial Council, which will then vote on the electronic recording proposal.

parties, or base compensation on the outcome of the case. This measure died in committee pursuant to House Rules and will not be considered again this year.

2017 PAC Fundraiser

The 2017 PAC fundraising initiative has begun with a bang! In the last two months, you, our members, have contributed more than \$870 to the NCRA Political Action Committee. Your contributions allow us to support NCRA's allies in Congress and ensure that our elected officials support and defend the court reporting profession. Your contributions also allow us to support and remain involved with organizations supporting the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. If every one of our members contributed just \$25, our capacity to influence policy and defend the court reporting profession would increase fivefold. Please [contribute](#) today!

If you have any questions about this newsletter or NCRA PAC, please contact State Government Relations Manager Matthew Barusch at mbarusch@ncra.org.

National Court Reporters Association | 800-272-6272 | msic@ncra.org | NCRA.org

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