

FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Deaf Minnesotans seek improved access to education and entertainment

by Sonny Wailowski

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to improve the lives of deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing Minnesotans. Several bills before the 2023 Minnesota Legislature would help our community with communications and information access.

Rep. Brian Daniels' (R-Faribault) own son, Jeremiah, is deaf. Daniels has spoken about how his son's disability has shaped his views on disability rights.

One of the most important issues facing deaf and hard of hearing Minnesotans is access to education. Many deaf and hard of hearing students struggle in traditional public schools, and they often fall behind their hearing peers. HF 0612 would ensure that all children have access to language and the acquisition of language, such as teaching American Sign Language (ASL) to a deaf child.

Another important issue facing deaf and hard of hearing Minnesotans is access to communication. Many deaf and hard of hearing people have difficulty communicating with hearing people, and they often feel isolated and alone.

HF 0842 would require school districts to provide direct instruction to students who are deaf or hard of hearing by teachers who are licensed to teach. This bill would help to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students have access to quality education.

HF 0909 would require televisions in public spaces to have closed captions readily enabled within its settings. This would help to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have access to information and entertainment.

HF 1282 creates a board of sign language interpreters and transliterators with rulemaking authority to have licensure(s) required. This would help to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have access to quality interpretation services.

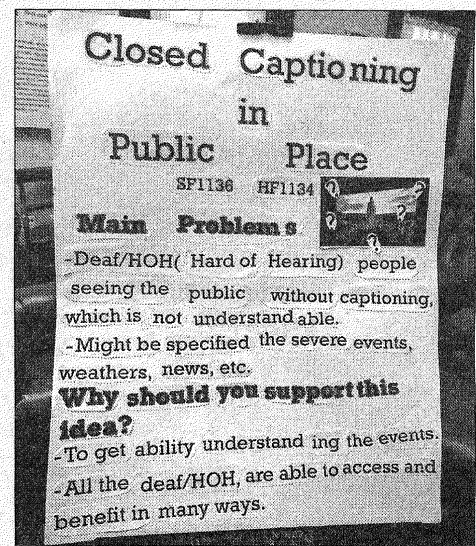
These four bills are important because they would help to improve the lives of deaf and hard of hearing Minnesotans. By providing access to education, communication and information, these bills would help to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing Minnesotans can live full and independent lives.

The bills are also important because

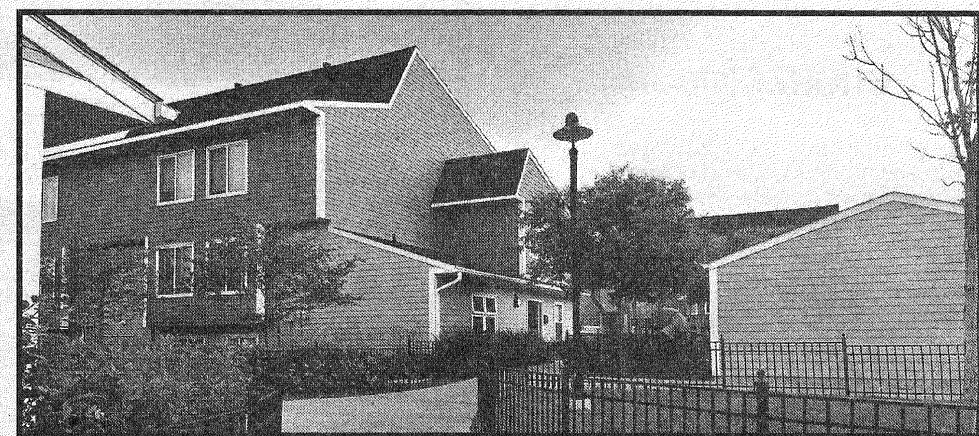
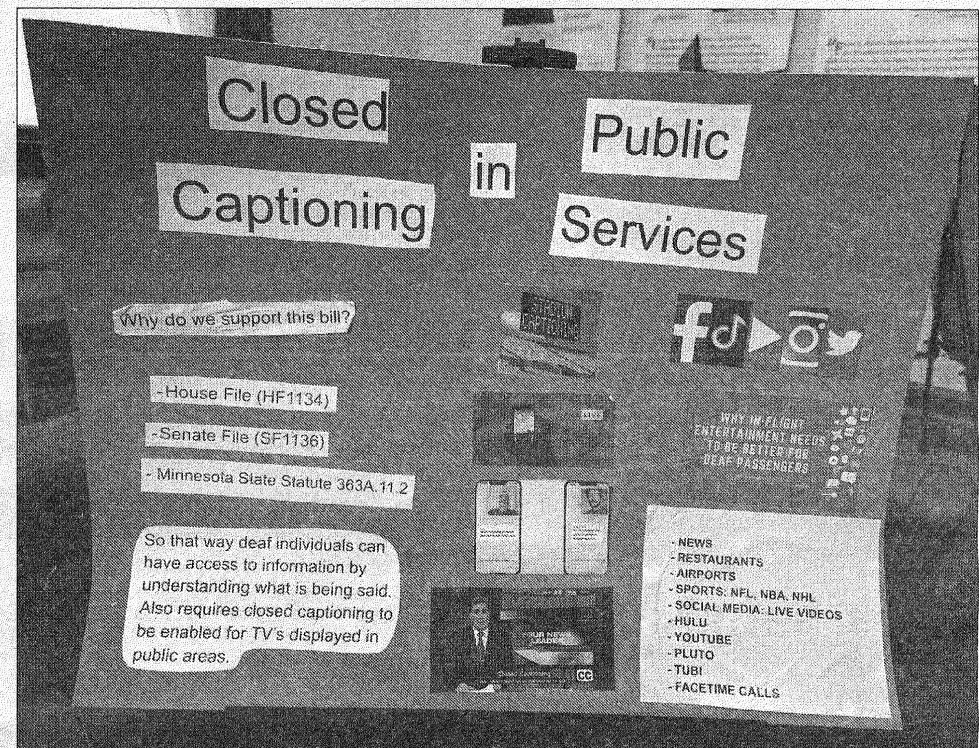
they would help to raise awareness of the needs of deaf and hard of hearing Minnesotans. Many people are not aware of the challenges that deaf and hard of hearing people face. These bills would help to educate the public about these challenges.

The bills were among issues covered at the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Day at the Capitol March 7.

Editor's note: Wailowski is a self-advocate from Faribault. He attended the Minnesota Commission of the Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Advocacy Day at the Capitol March 7.



Posters created by students from Metro Deaf School, Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf, and ThinkSelf Adult Learners Program were displayed at the capitol.



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Hilltop Manor	Eveleth	218-744-5169	1 BR
Hopkins Village Apartments	Hopkins	952-938-5787	1 & 2 BR
Village Apartments	Hopkins	952-938-5787	1 & 2 BR
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