

Dole Institute of Politics Archives and Special Collections

Representative to enable a specific witness to communicate with committee members, and only during the witness's testimony. Interpretation of committee meetings for audience members who are deaf or hard of hearing should be arranged for and paid by the committee.

- Sign language interpretation can be provided for official activities, including staff meetings, visits with constituents, press conferences, and work-related instructional classes (such as computer training). Interpretation by the CSSO staff is available only within the Capitol Hill complex.
- If you need an interpreter off Capitol Hill, the Congressional Special Services Office can offer assistance in locating one. The Special Services Office maintains a list of interpreter referral agencies nationwide and a listing of individual interpreters who are certified by the National Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf.
- A Senator's or Representative's Office may make arrangements with a commercial vendor for interpretation for an official function in the home State or outside the jurisdiction of the CSSO. This can be paid for with official funds.

Sign Language Classes

Basic sign language classes are offered for Congressional employees by staff of the Special Services Office when scheduling permits. For more information and registration forms, call the CSSO.

FM Systems

This is a wireless transmitting system that increases sound. For those who wear hearing aids, a special audio loop is used to amplify sound through a "T" frequency switch on the hearing aid. A headset is used by those who do

not wear a hearing aid. The FM system can be used for guided tours and in certain galleries and hearing rooms. This system can be of benefit both in one-on-one situations and in meetings of any size.

Congressional Offices may obtain FM equipment for short term use by contacting the CSSO.

Special Events

On Capitol Hill

CSSO provides support services and information to Congressional Offices for official business at the Capitol which may require special assistance for participants with disabilities, (i.e., wheelchair access information, sign language interpreters or escorts).

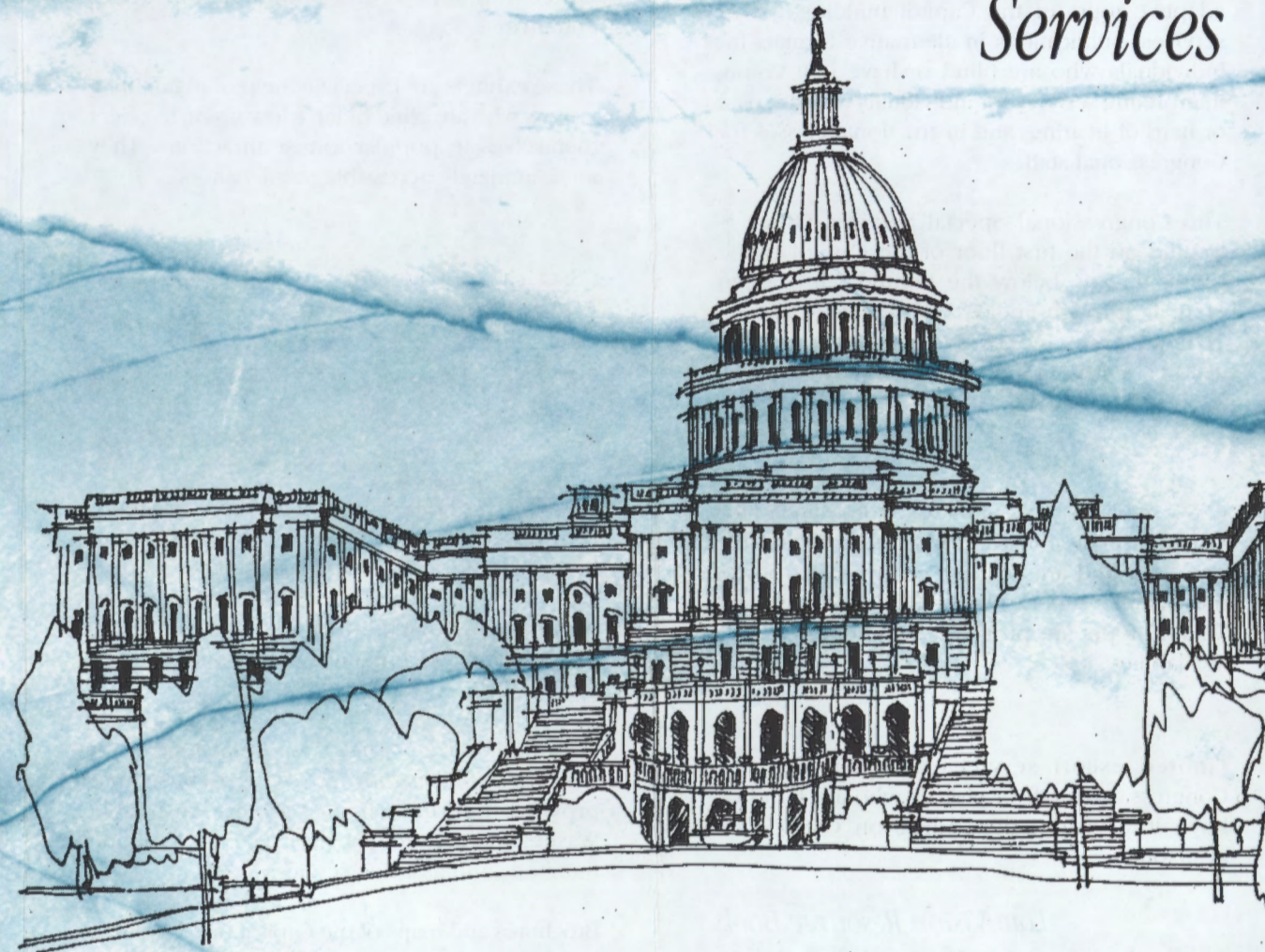
In the Home State

The CSSO can provide accessibility information to Senators' and Representatives' Offices who are planning events in the home State. This may include the following:

- Interpreters (see Interpreter Services), assistive listening devices and captioning for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- How to provide information in alternate formats (braille, large print) for individuals who are blind or have low vision. (The preferred point size for large print is 18 pt.)
- How to provide seating to accommodate visitors or participants using wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

The individual with the disability is the person who can best inform you of his or her needs. The Congressional Special Services Office is available to provide information and support services to Senate and House offices in meeting those needs.

Congressional Special Services



Congressional Special Services Office



The Congressional Special Services Office (CSSO) is a joint office under the jurisdiction of the Special Services Board, composed of the Senate Sergeant at Arms, the Clerk of the House, and the Librarian of Congress. CSSO offers a variety of services to assist staff, constituents and visitors who have disabilities. Services include adaptive tours of the Capitol building, escort services, publications in alternative formats for individuals who are blind or have low vision, interpreting services for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and instructional classes for Congressional staff.

The Congressional Special Services Office is located on the first floor of the Capitol in the Crypt, directly below the Rotunda. It is open Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. To request assistance or obtain more information, call Ext. 4-4048 (V) or 4-4049 (TDD/TTY).

Guided Tours

CSSO provides tours of the Capitol designed for visitors with disabilities. Tours last approximately one hour and are adapted to the needs of the individual. Tours can be scheduled in advance. Walk-in tours are provided depending on staff availability.

Escort Services

Limited escort services are provided for Congressional staff or visitors who are blind or have low vision, depending on CSSO staff availability.

Low Vision Resource Book

A collection of special photographs of selected areas of the Capitol Building is available to aid

individuals who have low vision or who cannot participate in a tour. A copy of this book is kept at the Special Services Office in the Crypt and at the Capitol Guide Service desk in the Great Rotunda in the Capitol Building.

Tactile Exhibit

A three-table Tactile Braille Exhibit of the Mall and Monument areas in Washington is displayed in the Crypt of the Capitol Building, just outside the CSSO. Additional Tactile Exhibits are located in the Hart Office Building, on the first floor outside the Disbursing Office, and in the Rayburn Office Building at the South Capitol Street entrance.

These exhibits are especially helpful in enabling visitors who are blind or have low vision to orient themselves to popular tourist attractions. They are completely accessible to all visitors.

Assistive Devices

CSSO can provide additional Information on Assistive Devices.

Accessibility Brochures and Maps

The *Congressional Special Services* brochure provides information on CSSO touring services, historical information, and maps of the Capitol Building that indicate facilities accessible to visitors with disabilities, such as elevators, restrooms, water fountains, telephones, ramps, etc.

Washington Highlights: Tour Information for Visitors with Disabilities is a brochure that provides information on parking, accessible Washington area tourist sites, TDD/TTY phone numbers, and assistive services.

Brochures and maps of the Capitol Building, Mall and monuments are available in large-print and braille for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

The Congressional Special Services brochure and the Washington Highlights: Tour Information for Visitors With Disabilities brochure are also available in ASCII disc format and audio tape upon request from the CSSO, Ext. 4-4048.

In cooperation with the CSSO, the Senate Service Department and the House Printing Services also distribute the brochures and maps listed above in braille and large print. To order copies of the above brochures and maps please call the Special Services Office.

Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf

TDD/TTY Seminars

CSSO provides seminars on TDD/TTY operation and etiquette for Congressional office staff. Call Ext. 4-4048 to register for a class.

Relay Services

The CSSO and the Congressional Switchboard assist in facilitating TDD/TTY use for Congress and can also serve as a relay station (in special situations) to forward messages to Senators and Representatives who do not have a TDD/TTY in their offices.

Congressional
Switchboard 202-224-3091 (TDD/TTY)

House Relay 202-225-1904 (TDD/TTY)
(messages only)

Referral Services

The CSSO also provides referral services for TDD/TTY callers requesting information, such as TDD/TTY Congressional Directory assistance, document copies, and general accessibility for visitors to Washington.

TDD/TTY Monitoring Program

CSSO continues to implement a voluntary TDD/TTY monitoring program intended to help assure Congressional Offices that their TDDs/TTYs are functioning properly.

Under the program, participating offices receive a TDD/TTY call from CSSO each month. The calls are made during business hours, generally between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm. Proper operation of the TDD/TTY is verified by either communicating directly with a staffer in the Member's office or by receiving a return TDD/TTY or voice call from the office after CSSO leaves a message on their TDD/TTY.

If the Member's office fails to return CSSO's TDD/TTY call or if CSSO cannot connect to the Member's TDD/TTY, CSSO staff will provide referrals to Telecommunications staff to correct mechanical problems or provide additional training for office staff, as needed.

Interpreter Services

Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing prefer different forms of sign language interpreting (American Sign Language, Signed English, Cued Speech, or Oral Interpreting). The CSSO can assist in locating these services.

For individuals who would benefit from sign language interpretation, the CSSO has certified interpreters available within the following guidelines:

- Depending on staff availability, sign language interpretation is provided in response to requests from Members only. Guidelines and Request Forms are available from the CSSO. To ensure that an interpreter is available, requests should be submitted to CSSO as far in advance as possible.
- Interpreters are not provided for committee meetings, unless requested by a Senator or