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ADA and Telecom Laws Drive Demand For More Court Reporters, NCRA Says

VIENNA, VA (July 23, 2007 – Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and various pieces of telecommunications legislation are driving the need for more closed captioning and realtime translation for the deaf or hearing disabled, not enough court reporters are graduating to keep up with the demand, the National Court Reporters Association (NCRA) said today.

On the eve of the 17th anniversary of the ADA being signed into law by President George H.W. Bush, the Census Bureau reports that more than 51 million Americans have some level of disability. The National Association for the Deaf estimates that hearing loss affects some 28 million Americans. For Americans who are deaf or hearing impaired, court reporters provide access to important information – a key aim of the ADA -- through closed-captioning and realtime translation.

Likewise, telecom legislation calls for various types of information technologies such as hi-def television to be made more accessible to people with disabilities, a need which will only grow as new technologies like Internet phones and iPods become more widely used by the population.

But a recently released NCRA report documents a steadily declining, downward trend in the number of court reporters graduating this year from NCRA-certified programs, with only about 350 graduates in 2007, when three times that number are needed nationwide.

"While both the demand for court reporters and the need for training in this profession's technological advances are on the rise, the ranks of court reporters and students of this profession continue to grow thin. This trend needs to be reversed quickly," said NCRA executive director and CEO Mark Golden.

To help meet the need for court reporters, NCRA is reaching out to interest potential students at www.Bestfuture.com. In addition, NCRA is supporting bills before Congress that call for competitive grants to train captioners and reporters who specialize in Communication Access Realtime Translation.

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National Court Reporters Association
 NCRA, a 24,000-member nonprofit organization, represents the judicial reporting and captioning professions. Members include official court reporters, deposition reporters, broadcast captioners, providers of realtime communication access services for deaf and hard-of-hearing people and others who capture and convert the spoken word into information bases and readable formats. For information, visit www.ncraonline.org.

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