



## **Delivering the News by Increasing Opportunities for New Yorkers with a Print Disability: A3144 (Pretlow)/S2924 (Parker)**

Never have people had a greater opportunity to get news and information delivered to them with the tap of a finger, the click of a mouse, or a verbal command. The development of text-to-speech and refreshable braille technologies have converged with unprecedented growth in digital telecommunication services to bring about an opportunity to extend the benefits of written information to people who would otherwise be left out. For that reason, the National Federation of the Blind has established NFB-NEWSLINE<sup>®</sup>, proudly sponsored by the New York Affiliate of the NFB.

NFB-NEWSLINE<sup>®</sup> is a news and information access service provided free of charge to people who are print-disabled. The service provides access to hundreds of newspapers and magazines. NFB-NEWSLINE<sup>®</sup> also provides access to Spanish language newspapers, breaking news publications from major networks, emergency weather alerts and forecasts, TV listings, job listings, and weekly circulars from national retailers.

New York State currently provides a telephone relay service to its deaf citizens funded by the Targeted Accessibility Fund. This service was established pursuant to federal law and is funded by a small surcharge on landline telephones throughout the State. Surplus revenue from this surcharge can be used to fund the NFB-NEWSLINE<sup>®</sup> service, without increasing the existing surcharge or imposing an additional surcharge.

Twelve states, including Texas, California, Alabama, and Georgia, use this funding stream for identical programs. Passage of the Newsline Bill would keep NFB-NEWSLINE<sup>®</sup> available to your constituents without raising taxes or cutting funding to other services. The New York State Commission for the Blind currently funds this program on a contractual basis. Passage of this legislation would enable the Commission to direct these funds to other needed services for blind New Yorkers.