

# Caption Campaign Ads

Most candidates running for office in Minnesota receive some form of public subsidy in order to run their campaigns. All such candidates are now required by law to caption their campaign advertisements or otherwise make them accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

“Caption Campaign Ads” is a grass-roots campaign that relies on community support to identify candidates who are using internet media to promote their campaigns. We want to publicize those who are captioning their programs and train those who aren't on how they can comply with the law.

## ***Key “Talking Points”***

Talking to a candidate? Want to explain why it's important to **Caption Campaign Ads**? Here are some basic talking points you can use in your email, phone call, or conversation:

1. Captioning is the law. The MN State legislature passed the law in 2008. So there's no excuse if you're not complying two years later.
2. People with disabilities vote – and they pay attention to candidates who take the time and effort to inform them in an accessible and effective manner.
3. Captioning isn't hard – and it isn't expensive. There's lots of information on how to do it. Go to [CaptionCampaignAds.org](http://CaptionCampaignAds.org) for more information.

## **What You Can Do**

### ***Be A Watchdog***

Do you see an ad on TV or on the internet that isn't captioned or otherwise accessible? Let us know! Here's how:

1. If it's a TV ad: write down the day, time, and television channel, in addition to who paid for the ad and on whose benefit. (Every ad must list in text on the screen who paid: “This ad was produced by Minnesotans for Long-Lived Loons,” or “I'm [candidate name] and I approve of this message.”)
2. If it's on the internet, copy the website's URL.
3. Email the information to us at [CaptionAds@gmail.com](mailto:CaptionAds@gmail.com).

If you see an ad that IS captioned, we want to know about it, too! We'll send the

candidate a congratulatory note, and we encourage you to do the same.

After the elections, we'll compile all of the data and present a report that details who captioned their ads and who didn't, as well as who accepted training from us and worked to improve their ads' accessibility.

### ***Tell the Candidate***

After you send us the info on non-captioned ads, email or call the candidate to complain.

We'll post the candidate contact info soon. In the meantime, here's where you can find a candidate's contact information: <http://candidates.sos.state.mn.us/>

### ***Register a Complaint***

The Minnesota Campaign Finance Board has oversight authority. Contact the Compliance Officer Joyce Larson, (651) 282-6894 [joyce.larson@state.mn.us](mailto:joyce.larson@state.mn.us) with information about the ad.

### ***The Law***

Section [10A.38](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=10A.38) (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/?id=10A.38>) defines how a candidate (who accepts public funds) must caption their campaign advertisements, whether audio or video. This means all podcasts, webcasts, and television advertisements must be captioned. The candidate can provide alternate resources such as a transcript on their website.

In sum:

A candidate must include closed captioning on his/her televised and website video ads if:

- The candidate received the public subsidy for financing his/her campaign
- The ads are professionally produced visual or audio recordings that are two minutes or less
- The candidate did not file with the campaign finance board the reasons for not captioning prior to the dissemination of the ad.
- The candidate can also provide a transcript online for his/her website ads instead of captioning.
- The candidate must also include on his/her website a transcript of all his/her radio advertisements unless s/he has filed with the campaign finance board before the ads were disseminated.

This law was passed in 2008, so the candidates and their campaigns should know about it and already be in compliance.

### **Web links:**

MCDHH website: <http://www.mncdhh.org>

Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board: <http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/>

CFB pdf on the campaign captioning law:  
[http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/issues/close\\_captioning.pdf](http://www.cfboard.state.mn.us/issues/close_captioning.pdf)

### **About Us**

The Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans (MCDHH) is a Governor-appointed non-cabinet state agency that advocates for and with people who are deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing for equal opportunity.

Funding for this program was provided by the MN Secretary of State as part of the Help America Vote Act.

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