



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS

CITY COUNCIL

WILLIE BURNLEY JR.

CITY COUNCILOR AT LARGE

A Resolution for Closed Captioned Accessibility

WHEREAS the lack of communication access to the audio content on TVs in public places has always existed as a barrier for individuals with certain disabilities; and

WHEREAS TV programming has played a critical role in conveying information from public health experts and government officials to the public during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS a structural inequity exists between hearing people and those who are deaf, hard of hearing, have developmental disabilities, and non-native English speakers in terms of access to critical public health information from non-captioned audible content on TVs in public spaces; and

WHEREAS when businesses enable the “open captions” function on their TVs, a live transcript of the program’s audio content is shown scrolling across the bottom of the screen; and

WHEREAS visible captions would eliminate a significant communication barrier for people with hearing loss and other disabilities by providing access to the information being given by speakers on TV programming in public places and thus inform the health decision of all community members; **THEREFORE, BE IT**

RESOLVED that the Somerville City Council calls on all Somerville bars, gyms, and businesses available to the public with the exception of movie theaters and concert venues to use captioning to enhance the safety and accessibility of all residents; and **BE IT FURTHER**

RESOLVED that the Somerville City Council supports an ordinance that would mandate the usage of closed captioning in these establishments.