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OCTOBER 21, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

Millions of Americans suffer from hearing defects, a disability which affects more persons than visual impairment, heart disease or any other chronic physical ailment.

A substantial percentage of the over 13 million Americans who suffer hearing impairment are unable to fully enjoy television as an entertainment and information medium due to their disability. And yet television is a primary source of entertainment in our nation.

The Public Broadcasting System has pioneered the development of a system to subtitle commercial television entertainment programs so that persons who have decoders can see printed words on their television screens. Those viewers without decoders would have no disruption of their television pictures in any way.

With the cooperation of the nation's television broadcasters, the producers of entertainment programs, the advertising community, equipment manufacturers and others, I believe we can bring about the voluntary implementation of a closed-captioning system. To that end, I have asked the Director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy to meet at the earliest opportunity with appropriate persons in the public and private sector to encourage the voluntary implementation of a closed-captioning system.

It is my strong conviction that every American should have the opportunity to participate fully in and enjoy the great entertainment and information sources we as a nation have to offer.

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