

WASH-CAP

The Washington
State
Communication
Access Project

*Enriching the World
for Those with
Hearing Loss*

Join WASH-CAP It's Easy & Free!

Ready to make your life better?

Send an email today to

john@wash-cap.com

asking for a free membership. We'll follow up with a brief questionnaire asking about you and the access issues you confront.

That's all there is to it. Then log onto our website, participate in the blog at wash-cap.com

and follow along as Wash-CAP enriches all our lives.

**With your help,
WASH-CAP
can put us back into the world.
Please join our effort.**

Washington State Communication
Access Project
A Washington Non-Profit Corporation
151 Finch Place SW, Suite C
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
For more information:
wash-cap.com
hearinglosslaw.com
Email: john@wash-cap.com

WASH-CAP

The Washington
State
Communication
Access Project



*Enriching the World
for
Those with Hearing Loss*

We've lost some or all of our hearing. But that shouldn't mean losing our social lives or our independence. We should be able to enjoy plays, lectures and movies, ride the ferry, catch a plane, attend a meeting, take a class or go to a restaurant with the same level of ease, safety and enjoyment as those with full hearing.

The law requires that kind of accessible world, and the technology exists to make it possible. What is missing is organized and systematic advocacy. That is what Wash-CAP provides.

Wash-CAP intends to change our world.

What is WASH-CAP?

The Washington State Communication Access Project (Wash-CAP) is a non-profit corporation whose principal purpose is to secure the civil rights of the Hard of Hearing (HOH.) Both federal and state laws declare that we who are HOH have the same right to participate in public life as anyone else.

But putting those laws into effect is left largely up to us, and as individuals we have been reluctant to act. It is difficult or even impossible to achieve much when we act alone.

Wash-CAP is an organization that will enable the HOH community to work collectively and systematically towards actually securing in practice those rights and benefits that the laws provide on paper.

What are our rights?

State and federal laws provide that the HOH are entitled to "auxiliary aids and services" that will give us access to spoken information. Those aids and services include not only amplifying devices and sign-language interpretation, but also open and closed caption-

Generally, the facility at which an event occurs—the courthouse, theater or school, for example—is required to provide those aids and services.

Wash-CAP wants to ensure that each facility makes the full array of aids and services available, including captioning.

How can WASH-CAP help me?

Wash-CAP wants to address a broad array of issues all across Washington. But by law, we can only deal with issues that affect one or more of our members.

By joining, you empower Wash-CAP to act on your behalf, not only for you, but for the entire HOH community.

That's why we've made joining easy—it costs nothing, and requires only an email request.

**By joining Wash-CAP,
we can help each other
make all our lives better.**

*Become a member
today. For free
membership, email
john@wash-cap.com
with "Membership" in
the subject line*

What's different about WASH-CAP?

Wash-CAP's specific emphasis is on securing the rights of the HOH.

We complement state and national organizations that provide support, information and services to individual members of our community, and that lobby for additional protections and benefits. But we address a need that is not their primary focus.

Our focus is on making speech and other aurally delivered material accessible to those whose primary language is spoken and written English.

How will WASH-CAP function?

Wash-CAP starts from the premise that people will do the right thing when asked nicely and given the information they need. We begin by sharing amongst ourselves those things we'd like to do if our hearing losses weren't an issue—the parts of our lives that brought us enjoyment, but that we've set aside.

Then we contact those public facilities or entertainment venues, point out that they are failing to meet our needs, and offer expertise leading to solutions.

We hope that this dialogue will lead to an agreeable outcome. Should the dialogue fail, Wash-CAP will then go to court to enforce the rights of the HOH.

Shouldn't state and federal agencies enforce the laws?

State and federal agencies have the power to enforce civil rights laws, including laws protecting people with physical challenges. But agencies have limited resources. Anticipating those limitations, the laws encourage both individuals and organizations acting on their behalf to implement those laws in court.

The laws further provide that a complaining party can recover attorney's fees, which means we can claim our rights at no cost. Those fees also provide a significant source of support for Wash-CAP.

Far from being a nuisance, **private enforcement is an essential and intended part of the whole plan.** As the Washington Supreme Court has said, a plaintiff in a discrimination claim is "vindicating state policy of the highest order."

We've been given the tools. Now it's up to us to use them. Wash-CAP give us a way to act together to enforce individual rights for our mutual benefit.

WASH-CAP

Why have an organization?

While individual members of the HOH community could enforce their own rights, individual actions are difficult in a number of respects. Communicating about a complaint and following through with court action can be highly stressful for an individual. When such an effort does succeed, the outcome can be a settlement that benefits only the particular individual.

With the number of people who are HOH and the sheer number of public places in Washington State, we can't achieve broad change by working one person and one establishment at a time.

Wash-CAP address those problems. As an organization whose purpose includes protecting the rights and interests of its members. **Wash-CAP may act on behalf of all its members, so long as even on person is affected.** For example, if one of our members runs into a hearing access problem at a theater, Wash-CAP, in its own name, will contact the theater owners, offer help, and as a last resort, bring court action to address the access problem, not just for that one member, but for all of us.

By acting as an organization, Wash-CAP takes the burden off the individual, brings about outcomes that apply to everyone, and provides an ongoing entity to monitor and enforce settlements.

WASH-CAP

Who is WASH-CAP?

Wash-CAP's founder and advocacy director is John Waldo, a Bainbridge Island attorney. Before moving to Washington, John spent two decades practicing law in Utah and Texas, concentrating on complex litigation.



John has an intensely personal interest in the legal rights of the HOH. He has a moderate-severe binaural hearing loss, wears hearing aids, and like all of us in the HOH community, functions in the hearing world by employing a variety of coping strategies. John fully understands not only the barriers we face, but how greatly our lives could be enriched by the removal or at least the lowering of those barriers.

In addition to his work with Wash-CAP, John advocates for the unique legal needs of individuals who are HOH or Deaf in areas such as education, employment and public or private insurance matters.

Contact John Waldo at
206 842-4106
johnfwaldo@hotmail.com
john@wash-cap.com

**Contact John Waldo at
206 842-4106
johnfwaldo@hotmail.com
john@wash-cap.com**