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April 1, 2019

Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street SE

Washington, DC 20554

Re: Comments to Media Bureau on Video Description Marketplace Improvements (DA 19-40)

Dear Chairman Pai:

I welcome the opportunity to comment on the Federal Communications Commission request for comments on improvements to the video description marketplace covered under the 21st Century Communications & Video Accessibility Act (CVAA)( PL 111-260). It is my hope the comments provided under this request will demonstrate to congress the success that has come through the CVAA toward making a key part of American life accessible for individuals who are blind and visually impaired. At the same time, I believe there is still much opportunity for growth as we near the tenth anniversary of the CVAA.

Chief among these priorities around the CVAA is advocacy for expansion of audio description (AD). According to the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Vision Health Initiative, the incidence of blindness will continue to significantly increase over the next couple of decades, essentially doubling from the time the CVAA was passed in 2010.[[1]](#footnote-2) This increase continues to create an increase in demand for accessible video programming. As older-age adults rely more on the care of their families, it can reasonably be assumed that the impact will ripple across the overall market share of households, wherein families choose to seek reasonable accommodations for their loved ones.

Past studies affirm this assertion, showing that over 75% of individuals who are blind or have significant vision loss live in a household with more than one individual. It is my belief this is certainly a recognition that a significant share of American households will significantly be impacted, requiring greater steps be taken to make homes more universally accessible. Television provides a window into the outside world, and while the CDC's VHI acknowledges that increased morbidity, depression, and other factors that prevent social inclusion are greater for individuals with severe vision loss, I encourage any action that can be taken to improve the quality of life through universal access in a manner that creates equal participation and inclusion in American society.

Respectfully Submitted,

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1. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)