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May 1, 2019

Honorable Ajit Pai, Chairman

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street SE

Washington, DC 20554

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

Dear Chairman Pai:

I am writing to you in support of the comments filed by the American Council of the Blind (ACB)  on April 1. Video description is a transformative tool enjoyed by Americans who are sighted, visually impaired, as well as blind. I agree with ACB that the FCC’s report to inform Congress on the video description marketplace should:

* Recommend the expansion of video description to serve all Americans;
* Recommend expanding the required hours of described programming;
* Recommend that video described programming be passed through to consumers, regardless of the means of video delivery; and,
* Recommend the creation of a centralized guide listing for all video described programming.

Losing my vision in my early twenties meant I could no longer enjoy the television shows and movies I used to watch, or that my peers were watching and talking about. This left me more isolated and more limited in the activities I could enjoy as a newly blind young person. The expansion of video description in recent years has opened up the world of television to me once again.

Watching shows with my husband is a truly enjoyable activity for us now that so many shows are described. I also enjoy being able once again to talk about popular shows with friends, family, and coworkers.

However, there are still so many popular shows that I am interested in, but cannot enjoy because they are not described. I would like to see more providers taking the Netflix approach, where they describe all Netflix original programming and provide description, where available, on the other shows and movies they make available. I am particularly frustrated in HBO’s failure to describe any of their shows. They have so many of the best, most talked about shows, and I am unable to watch any of them. With the move to shows being available exclusively on streaming services, with offerings expanding all the time, it is crucial that these services are included in requirements for providing video description.

For all of the reasons above, I strongly support the comments submitted by the American Council of the Blind (ACB).

Sincerely,

Meghan Parker