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In the Matter Of:

**Annual Assessment of the Status of Competition in
Markets for the Delivery of Video Programming**

CS Docket No 97-141



COMMENTS OF

Helen Harris

President and Founder

RP International & TheatreVision™

Post Office Box 900

Woodland Hills, CA 91365

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In the Matter of:

**Annual Assessment of the Status of Competition in
Markets for the Delivery of Video Programming**

CS Docket No 97-141

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL COMMENTS OF

**Helen Harris
President and Founder
RP International & TheatreVision™
Post Office Box 900
Woodland Hills, California 91365**

RECEIVED
JUL 23 1997
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I, Helen Harris, President and Founder of RP International and TheatreVision™, file these comments on July 22, 1997, in the Annual Assessment of Competition in Markets for the Delivery of Video Programming, CS Docket No 97-141.

Summary of Comments

While sighted school age children can look forward to learning through the vast accessibility of the internet and television programming, their blind classmates are left behind in a dark world. Television viewing, as a social and educational activity, occurs daily in millions of homes across the country, but the blind are left out of any resulting discussions or enjoyment because of the lack of video description for television programming.

Discrimination against the blind and visually challenged is apparent, as networks and other channels blatantly respond that bilingual accessibility to the SAP channel is preferable to video description for America's blind. These discriminations can and will be rectified by video description, which is easy to accommodate as we have learned through the description of major motion pictures for television, the most difficult form of audio/video description today. Video description of current major motion pictures via TheatreVision™ proves that this is possible; it is possible now, and can be implemented, certainly, before the next millennium.

It is clear that captioning for the deaf and hearing impaired has made great strides and is allotted many hours of programming, while the video description of programming is noticeably unavailable -- nearly non-existent.

Consumer opportunities have been totally ignored by the television industry where the blind population is concerned. It is almost as if "blind people don't need to know anything!" When, all things considered, the blind and visually challenged and other disabled people probably have more time to spend in front of television sets than any other population, this makes them a potentially lucrative consumer market.

In paragraph 36 of the FCC report states that there are 26 to 27 million illiterate adults in the United States. Question: has anyone ever counted how many of these are blind? These illiterate adults would benefit greatly from video description, making the understanding of what they are seeing far more clear, thus enhancing their educational opportunities via another outlet.

Paragraph 31 of the FCC report states that many of the deaf in the hard-of-hearing community view the issue of closed captioning in terms of basic civil rights and rights to equal access that should not be subject to a cost benefit analysis. A survey shows that the most feared disability known to man is blindness, as it cuts off all ability to absorb information visually, to define space and to overcome the extraordinary difficulties presented in transportation; driving, etc., and other visual activities. Since the blind person is dependent on audio for safety, education and life itself, then audio/video description of all forms of life is a civil right, not a gift, and should be mandated as such.

The impact of audio/video description on the lives of the vision impaired is immeasurable. Similarly, the impact of audio/video description on family members, relatives and friends who must now describe to the blind, will be beneficial in promoting more equality and family interaction.

As the world watches technology land on Mars, triumphantly congratulating itself . . . so does the world of people who live in darkness wait for technology to bring home to them their civil right to receive education, entertainment and quality of life with the same equal rights as all other people. It took the world more than 25 years to agree to caption for people who live in silence. It is now time for the “Mars lesson” to bring the thrill of the simple description by audio to the eyes of the blind. Nearly 31 million people were, unbelievably, unable to see the spectacular 180 million mile achievement made by America. TheatreVision’s time and place is now.

The visually impaired and blind believe that no one should make decisions on whether or not they can have description.

Following are comments based on material included in the Notice of Inquiry, CS Docket No. 97-141:

1. What are the prospects for increasing competition in markets for the delivery of video description?

Answer: The prospects for increasing competition for the delivery of video description in every major market are incredible and will provide new avenues for revenue -- both for the provider, that is, the television networks; the program that’s being shown; the sponsors that are involved and the television manufacturers such as Zenith, Motorola, RCA, etc.

Because there is a potential of 31 million new viewers, the recruiting of these viewers as possible new customers would be enticing to all of the people involved in presenting television programming to each home in America and abroad. It is our belief that this is an untapped market, and the competitive edge that each of the corporations would have at the beginning would accelerate as new viewers are brought into viewing television because video description is there.

Cable, for instance, would probably triple its viewing audience because the blind do not necessarily apply for cable television due to lack of video description. Viewing network television without eyesight is merely a way of keeping up with today's news and the bits and pieces of information in some shows that provide entertainment for someone without eyesight. Video description could change this dramatically and opportunities for increased revenue for corporations, sponsors and providers would accelerate rapidly as the buying power of the blind and visually challenged becomes more of a force.

2. What do you see as restraining competition for the delivery of video description?

Answer: The only restraint in competition for delivery of video description are barriers put up by providers such as networks, satellite owners, and discriminatory practices against providing single focused (at least perceived that way) video description to a certain audience. These obstacles can restrain the process of video description for a while but will, we believe, certainly disappear as the competition in the marketplace becomes obvious. The evidence of the purchasing power of the blind will certainly clear the air from all restraints. The American Disabilities Act will also prevent any restraining possibilities for keeping video description from becoming a competitive market.

3. How can you provide greater accessibility of video description for persons with visual disabilities?

Answer: There is in place already a very detailed and refined marketing plan for video description to the blind and those with other disabilities that could benefit from video description. Our feasibility study tells us that the goal of reaching 31 million of these viewers can be attained and these markets can be reached with the expertise gleaned from a 24 year history of publicizing and marketing TheatreVision™[©] and RP

International. Our involvement with high-profile celebrities such as Bob Hope, Charlton Heston, Steve Garvey, Kareem Abdul Jabbar and Troy Aikman, as well as studio heads, directors and radio and television stations, gives us the leading edge in a marketing plan that cannot fail.

4. Do you have factual information and statistical data about the status of video description distributors using different technologies and changes that have occurred in the past year?

Answer: We spent a lot of time recruiting information on all forms of access to video description and descriptive techniques for home television viewing and motion picture going, and keep an up-to-date data base on new advances as they occur. We are developing new technology at a very fast rate with state-of-the-art technology which encompasses the use of all the new developments which have occurred within the last 12 months, 24 months and 5 years. These are exciting times, and we are well positioned to stay ahead of the obstacles and to keep developing new techniques and descriptive abilities as obstacles confront us. Yes, we have information on video description as it stands today, both in terms of a) done by individuals on an individual case-by-case basis for live programming, b) video description of videos and their sale through catalogues and other means, c) delivery of descriptive television through the SAP channel, d) our own TheatreVision™[©], which is the highest form of technology, allowing the most freedom to visually challenged people to attend motion picture theaters and hear video description in a private manner.

Not like captioning, where open captioning interferes with the sighted audience who must stare at the caption screen which interferes with their movie-going, so that only selected theaters and prints of movies can be shown to the deaf community. TheatreVision™[©] has gone to an extreme development to prevent

this from occurring and to make it possible for sighted people, their families and friends to attend motion picture theaters and to enjoy descriptive programming along with, beside and on an equal basis with the blind. Blind people can access our descriptive technology with separate devices and sighted people do not have to participate in this description if they do not wish to do so. This allows the blind person complete accessibility and equal footing with their neighbors, families and friends as they become equal in hearing the description of what is occurring on a video or motion picture screen. It provides independence for the blind person so that they may attend a screening or watch television programming unassisted by others, which is a new phenomenon in allowing freedom for the blind.

5. To what extent are viewers switching from cable to satellite service, and to what extent are satellite customers also simultaneously cable subscribers?

Answer: There are no statistics that are readily kept on this situation, although most homes carry regular network programming and cable television and, as the marketplace promotes satellite situations, more and more people will adapt satellite situations into their home viewing as their funds allow. This extra expense, however, could be seen as an expenditure that a blind or visually challenged person might not want to make, but when considering the cost of cable on a monthly basis then, perhaps, there would be a savings in having satellite services replace cable. The down side of this is that there might be difficulty in bringing network programming into the home without cable involvement.

6. What number of broadcast television stations are currently capable of transmitting and decoding a secondary video programming signal and data and the cost of having this capability?

Answer:

CBS - has the ability to transmit the SAP channel on both coasts, but does not get much use. Affiliate stations incurred a significant cost to install a second channel for stereo for some stations. Only a handful have SAP. They estimate one-third of the affiliates are capable of SAP transmission and only half of those actually use the facility. CBS has no formal record of SAP and no mandate to do more.

ABC - at network does not have capability of SAP.

NBC - out of 200 plus affiliates, NBC engineering estimates only 12 stations are equipped for SAP: Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, San Diego, Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Denver, Corpus Christie, San Francisco, Miami and Sacramento. Smaller markets cannot afford to install SAP.

Disney Channel - has no SAP capability. They had planned to install by May/June 1997, but all equipment acquisitions have been put on hold (possibly waiting for approaching HDTV with its multiple audio channels).

PBS - the Public Broadcasting network has 340 affiliates of which 130 can carry the SAP signal. Many of the smaller PBS stations haven't even converted to stereo. Larger proportion of stations carry SAP since the Federal government has furnished support. PBS representatives report that the SAP delivery is not satisfactory to many blind people since they do not want to sit alone watching television. (Sighted family members prefer not to hear the description of things they can see on the screen.)

All parties seem to agree that the cost of SAP equipment, which would include the ability to receive, transport and re-transmit, would be about \$50,000 per channel, per station.

When considering SAP for cable carriers, even the smallest cable operator would have to agree to pass that channel on, but would have to install the equipment for EACH channel requiring SAP.

In our investigation and attempts to put descriptive television on network programming, we have been told over and over that the cost is prohibitive and that many of the affiliates do not have the capability to provide the SAP service. By the same token, we have been told that this secondary audio program channel is for use by bi-lingual, particularly Spanish, and could not be used for the blind, which we believe is discriminatory. We will continue to uncover how many networks and affiliate stations are capable of receiving the SAP channel and transmitting to its blind audience and have made it a goal to see that this occurs across the country.

7. What are the costs of providing video description for video programming, and how can you fund it?

Answer: We have found the cost of providing video description for video programming to be different on a case-by-case basis, although it averages from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per hour. We have found private funding and corporate funding to be the only direction that is accessible right now, and are doing this on a per project basis, providing description of television programming, both live and pre-taped, when possible.

8. Will the implementation of digital technology provide additional audio channels that would increase the feasibility of video description?

Answer: Yes, we are told by the “powers that be” and the technology people involved that digital technology will immediately do away with the restrictions and that many more audio channels will become available instantly. We continue to assess this and seek out information from all parties involved in digital technologies. This is a very exciting prospect for the blind and other disabled people.

9. Can you provide specific methods and schedules for insuring the video description of high technical and quality standards?

Answer: TheatreVision™ has already proven itself to be the leader in providing the highest quality of script writing, descriptive track writing and for casting the roles of the readers at a high entertainment value level. For instance, TheatreVision has provided first-run movies such as *Hercules*, *Lost World*, *Volcano*, *The American President*, *Braveheart*, *Home for the Holidays*, *Forrest Gump*, *Apollo 13* and other motion pictures and television programming such as, *It s A Wonderful Life*, *Schindler’s List*, *The American Teacher Awards*, *Chariots of Fire*, and the classic *Christmas Eve* on many occasions, both in theaters and television programming, with the aid of celebrity talent and Academy Award winning directors and producers. Actors such as Martin Sheen, Katharine Hepburn, and William Shatner have described our films, bringing a presence and enhanced entertainment and educational value as well as equal rights values to the process while educating the describers, the studios and television programmers to the needs for video description and how it enhances the life of someone who spends 24 hours a day, 365 days a year living in the dark. Often this darkness is pierced only by TheatreVision’s descriptions.

10. What efforts have you, as a disabled, blind person, made regarding coordination in new technology standard setting and funding mechanisms?

Answer: As a blind person with a disability, I saw a great need to bring the world of video description to the millions of people who have been prevented from this wonderful form of accessibility.

TheatreVision™[©], in a very short period of time, has made an aggressive and successful attempt to educate the core of the entertainment industry from which all video programming begins; that is, all the major studios and networks involved in the providing of entertaining movies and television programming. In an all out effort to convince and educate, TheatreVision sends representatives on a daily basis to visit all of these people, explaining with both video and audio presentations the technology, the sound quality and the creative source of writers whose skill presents the original script writer s work in the best and highest quality. TheatreVision continues to provide funding, seek new funding and develop new technology on a regular basis to make these advances happen as quickly as possible and at a high level to bring the blind and visually challenged up to a level of equality that has not been present prior to the development of TheatreVision. Bringing people out of their homes to motion pictures theaters, for instance, is a high priority for TheatreVision, so that social involvement and enhancement of seeing motion pictures with a sighted audience and enjoying Broadway shows with a sighted audience becomes a way of life. It allows the home viewer who is blind to participate in descriptive television as a way of continuing their entertainment and education. TheatreVision represents a move toward equality of human resources, toward living a lifetime that is equal and accessible for all education and entertainment processes, making the lives of the visually challenged as whole as possible.

History of TheatreVision™

TheatreVision™ was established in 1992 with the development of *Forrest Gump* as the first motion picture with video description shown in a motion picture theater on December 28, 1994. Spearheaded by blind activist, writer, producer and homemaker Helen Harris, TheatreVision entered the world of producing descriptive television and motion pictures for theaters in a bold attempt to bring Hollywood's top leaders, directors, studio heads and actors together so that they would begin to understand the world of the blind and their need for video description.

To date, the projects described for television and motion pictures by TheatreVision™ are:

Motion Pictures:

Forrest Gump
Pocahontas
The Hunchback of Notre Dame
Batman Forever
Braveheart
The American President
The Truth About Cats and Dogs
Home for the Holidays
Little Women
Apollo 13
Flipper
Twister
Mission: Impossible
Hercules
Lost World

Television:

The Academy Awards, 1996 and 1997
The 100th Olympics
The American Teacher Awards - 2 airings
Heaven Can Wait
Chariots of Fire
Christmas Eve

History of TheatreVision™ (continued)

Between one and thirty million people may be visually challenged or otherwise perceptively disabled, and Helen Harris' message to the entertainment industry is clear: the need for description of motion pictures will bring sighted persons and blind persons to movie theaters and television screens on an equal footing. One argument made by TheatreVision to the studios is that a sighted person goes to the movie theater, pays for a ticket, sees all of the screen and enjoys all of the pleasures of the programming while the blind person pays the same amount of money, but sees little or none of it. Thus, there are unfair practices in charging the same ticket price for two different people: one who is sighted and one who is not sighted; one who can enjoy the whole movie, and one who can enjoy almost none of it without video description being present. TheatreVision's mission is to continue to educate the studios, their directors, producers and celebrity entertainers to the need to provide video description for all facets of video, television, motion picture and live programming to all of the audience, not just the sighted.

With a search on for technology and information, Helen Harris met with each of the studio leaders, convincing each of them of the need for their studios to become involved, and developed a high quality TheatreVision committee. This committee is dedicated to the future of describing of motion pictures and television programming for visually impaired people. Inspired by the persistence and tenacity of the blind volunteer, each of the studio heads has been introduced to the descriptive quality and need to describe scenes in motion pictures and television programming and live shows for an unsighted audience. Many of these people did not really understand the losses, and admitted this in meetings. They were delighted and continue to be delighted with the concept of TheatreVision™.

Helen Harris

RP International & TheatreVision™©

CS Docket No 97-141

History of TheatreVision™© (continued)

TheatreVision™© made a 12 month goal and reached it in 12 months, and that was:

- 1) to obtain a motion picture from each studio and describe it;
- 2) to bring the same technology and quality of work to television programming;
- 3) to describe a live Broadway show;
- 4) to continue the description of programming such as the Academy Awards, the American Teacher Awards and other special events such as the 100th Olympics.

TheatreVision™© reached its first goal and continues to expand its delivery of high quality description and impressing and actively soliciting on behalf of the blind the need to have described programming continued and also to encompass this into the computer world as it expands.

It is the belief of TheatreVision™© that the technology is here today. What is not here today is coming at a rapid pace. As the internet expands, so does TheatreVision, and it will be incorporated in using this technology to bring the blind into an equal footing with the sighted. Other disabled communities will benefit from TheatreVision, as will the elderly and, in many cases, the hard of hearing, whose hearing loss can be enhanced by the listening devices in theaters, but whose understanding and comprehension is also embellished by TheatreVision. It is the goal of TheatreVision to see that all movies and television programming is accomplished within the next five years.

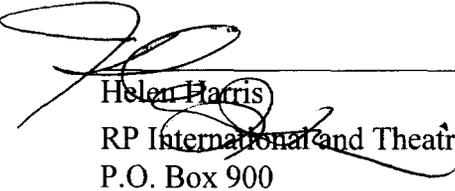
TheatreVision™© has also recruited 100 major agencies and the support of 50 governors, the Hollywood community and sports teams from the NFL, NBA and baseball.

We are enclosing support materials on the wonderful work of TheatreVision™© for your perusal as listed on the following page.

Summary of Documents Supporting TheatreVision™

- 1) Letters of support from Governors, Senators and Congressmen across the United States.
- 2) Letters of support from a wide spectrum of the entertainment industry.
- 3) Letters of support from 84 agencies for the blind and vision impaired across the United States.
- 4) 1995 Congressional Record submitted by Helen Harris, President and Founder of RP International.
- 5) Proclamations from 51 U.S. Governors proclaiming February 21, 1995 as "TheatreVision Day," the advent of the nationwide recognition of video description.
- 6) Highlights from various TheatreVision projects.
- 7) Press coverage.
- 8) Quotes from blind and visually challenged individuals.
- 9) RP International's Newsletter citing the success of video description projects
- 10) Quotes from the AFB booklet, Who's Watching? A Profile of the Blind and Visually Impaired Audience for Television and Video.

Submitted by:



Helen Harris
RP International and TheatreVision™
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365
July 22, 1997

The name TheatreVision™ is used courtesy of Theater Vision, Rockville, Md.

Attachment 1:

**TheatreVision™ Support Letters
from
Governors, Senators and Congressmen**

Helen Harris
President and Founder
RP International & TheatreVision™
Post Office Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

CS Docket No 97-141



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

March 6, 1997

Ms. Helen Harris
RP International
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Dear Helen:

Governor Wilson asked that I respond on his behalf to your much appreciated correspondence. He was delighted to learn of the success of TheatreVision and the establishment of the National Academy of Audio Description in Los Angeles, and of the successful "captioning" that the hearing impaired are beginning to enjoy. The fact that you have been able to show motion pictures in theaters with a "silent and second audio track" that can be heard and/or not heard by sighted people is great news as well. That this will allow blind people to go into a movie theater and enjoy the experience with others because of a small earbud, which carries this second audio-description synchronized with the movie, is a wondrous gift.

The governor congratulates you and the organizations that have joined your National Academy of Audio Description. It is because of people like you that we all learn how to better assist and make accessible our world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rosalie Zalis".

Rosalie Zalis
Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor



LAWTON CHILES
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA

Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

January 21, 1997

Ms. Helen Harris
RP International
Post Office Box 900
Woodland Hills, California 91365

Dear Helen:

Congratulations on the success of TheatreVision and your establishment of the National Academy of Audio Description in Los Angeles. I have watched with wonder the successful "captioning" that hearing impaired individuals are beginning to enjoy, and now your audio description can bring thrilling description to blind and visually-challenged people. This is a wonderful gift to humanity.

The organizations that have joined your National Academy of Audio Description are to be congratulated for their involvement. It is because of people like you that we all learn how to better assist and make accessible our world.

Keep up the good work!

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,


LAWTON CHILES

LC/hss



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

ALBERT R. WYNN
Fourth District
Maryland

February 11, 1997

Ms. Helen Harris
RP International
Post Office Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Dear Ms. Harris:

I would like to take this opportunity to commend you on your services to the blind and visually impaired. After witnessing the success of "captioning" for hearing impaired, it is my sincere wish to see the same results for the visually impaired through audio description.

Through this technology, millions of blind and visually impaired Americans will be able to enjoy television programming and motion pictures. On behalf of the citizens of the 4th Congressional District of Maryland, thank you for your important contributions to our society. If I can be of assistance to you in this endeavor, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Albert R. Wynn.
Member of Congress

ARW:db

COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
RANKING DEMOCRAT

SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

WHIP AT LARGE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0505

DISTRICT OFFICE
8058 FEDERAL BUILDING
850 CAPITOL MALL
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 498-5800

December 23, 1996

Ms. Helen Harris
RP International
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

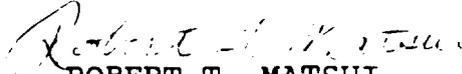
Dear Ms. Harris:

I was pleased to learn about your success with TheaterVision and the establishment of the National Academy of Audio Description in Los Angeles.

It is certainly exciting to see the successful "captioning" that our hearing impaired neighbors and friends can now enjoy, as well as the audio-description advancements that can bring thrilling description to blind and visually challenged people. This progress that enables blind people to go into a moving theater and become "equal" because of a small earbud, carrying this second audio-description synchronized to the movie, is quite a significant accomplishment.

My congratulations and heartfelt support are with you as you continue this successful endeavor. I trust that you will keep me informed of your progress.

Sincerely,


ROBERT T. MATSUI
Member of Congress

2408 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0529
(202) 225-3976

DISTRICT OFFICE:
8436 WEST 3D STREET
SUITE 600
LOS ANGELES, CA 90048-4183
(213) 651-1040

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0529

HENRY A. WAXMAN
29TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

January 13, 1997

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE
GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT

PHILIP M. SCHILIRO
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Ms. Helen Harris
RP International
Post Office Box 900
Woodland Hills, California 91365

Dear Ms. Harris:

I am delighted to know about your great success with TheatreVision and of the establishment of National Academy of Audio Description in Los Angeles. Movies should be enjoyed by everyone and the technology that provides a second audio track and can provide the context and description for movies for the blind and visually impaired will bring great enjoyment to millions.

Congratulations to you and everyone involved in this enterprise, and please keep me informed of your activities.

With kind regards, I am

Sincerely,


HENRY A. WAXMAN
Member of Congress

HAW:pd

JULIAN C. DIXON
32D DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE
APPROPRIATIONS

RANKING MEMBER,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MEMBER,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
JUSTICE, STATE, AND JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON LEGISLATIVE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND POLICY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0532

2252 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0532
(202) 225-7084
FAX (202) 225-4091

ANDREA TRACY HOLMES
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

DISTRICT OFFICE:
LA CIENEGA SLAUSON BUSINESS PARK
5100 WEST GOLDLEAF CIRCLE, #208
LOS ANGELES, CA 90056-1271
(213) 678-5424
FAX (213) 678-6026

PATRICIA MILLER
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

January 17, 1997

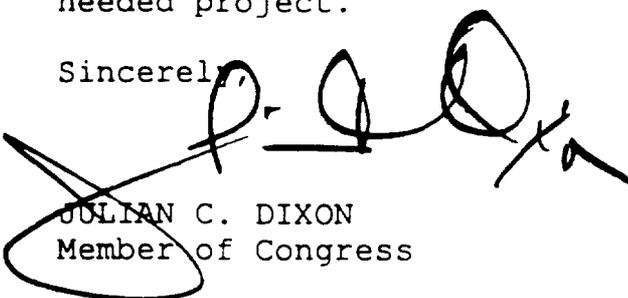
Ms. Helen Harris
President and Founder
RP International
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, California 91365

Dear Ms. Harris:

Thank you for informing my office of the wonderful project you have undertaken to bring a measure of enjoyment to the lives of vision-impaired Americans. Project Audio Description will ensure that a greater number of disabled Americans will have the opportunity to enjoy movies. While I am not a member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, which has jurisdiction over the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please be assured that I strongly support your efforts. To assist you, I have enclosed a list of the members of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Again, thank you for your diligence in organizing this much-needed project.

Sincerely,



JULIAN C. DIXON
Member of Congress

JCD:pj

Enclosure

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0524

January 16, 1997

Ms. Helen Harris
PO Box 900
Woodland Hills, CA 91365

Dear Ms. Harris:

Last Tuesday, January 7th, I was honored to be sworn in as a new member of the United States Congress to represent the 24th District of California (which includes much of the San Fernando Valley, the Conejo Valley, the Santa Monica Mountains, and Malibu). When I arrived in Washington I found over 500 letters waiting for my response.

In the months following the November 5th election, most of my new colleagues had the opportunity to concentrate on preparing for their Congressional duties. In my case, however, I continued to serve as a member of the State Board of Equalization until taking office as a member of Congress. As you can imagine, it will take me some time to give your letter the consideration it deserves. Before Congress reconvenes on February 4th, and before I cast my first substantive vote, I will review your letter and take your recommendations under consideration. Your input is an important resource that enables me to represent our communities.

Some of the letters that I received discuss problems that the residents of the 24th District are having with various federal agencies. If your letter concerns such a problem, within the next few days I will assign it to one of the caseworkers in either my Woodland Hills office or my Thousand Oaks office. This caseworker will aid me in assisting you. If you are having a problem that requires our immediate attention, please call John Anderson at (818)-999-1990 (Woodland Hills office) or Glenda Barnard-Lee at (805)-449-2375 (Thousand Oaks office). They will begin to focus on your concerns immediately and will brief me on your matter.

Once again, I appreciate that you have taken the time to share your concerns with me. I look forward to working for you. Thank you for bearing with us during this transition period.

Sincerely,



BRAD SHERMAN
Member of Congress

BJS/al

HENRY B. GONZALEZ
20TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

2413 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4320
202-225-3236

HOME OFFICE:
B-124 FEDERAL BUILDING
727 E. DURANGO STREET
SAN ANTONIO, TX 78206-1286
210-472-6195

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4320

December 18, 1996

COMMITTEE
BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEES
EX-OFFICIO MEMBER
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
AND CONSUMER CREDIT
CAPITAL MARKETS, SECURITIES AND GSEs
DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
MONETARY POLICY
GENERAL OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

FILE REF pth/H3

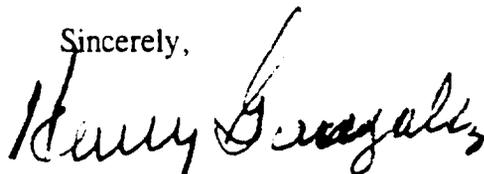
Ms. Helen Harris
President and Founder
RP International
P.O. Box 900
Woodland Hills, California 91365

Dear Ms. Harris:

Thank you for your letter of December 7, 1996, regarding your "Project Audio Description" which will make visual media accessible to the blind. I believe, and trust, that you have already contacted your Members of Congress from California as it is they who can best lead any effort in your behalf with a federal agency.

With every good wish, I remain

Sincerely,



Henry B. Gonzalez
Member of Congress



GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

December 5, 1996

Mr. Army Archerd
The Eyes of Christmas
Post Office Box 900
Woodland Hills, California 91365

Dear Mr. Archerd:

Thank you for your invitation for Governor Wilson to participate in a television special "Eyes of Christmas" on December 22, 1996 in Los Angeles.

The Governor was delighted to receive your invitation. Unfortunately, due to the heavy demands on his schedule, he will be unable to accept your invitation. He has, however, suggested that I forward your invitation to the Governor's Los Angeles Office. That office coordinates surrogate speakers for Governor Wilson in the greater Los Angeles area. If you would like to have a representative attend and present a special message, please contact Brett Holmes in the Los Angeles Office at least eleven working days prior to your event at 213/897-0322.

The Governor regrets that he is unable to join you. Best wishes for a successful event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margo Reid Brown".

Margo R. Brown
Director of Scheduling

cc: Brett Holmes - Governor's Los Angeles Office