

WT 96-176

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RECEIVED

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FCC MAIL ROOM
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, DC 20554

Members of the FCC:

This is in reference to Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996: Thank you so much for all you have done for the hard of hearing in gaining accessibility to technology available today. We, as hard of hearing people (10% of our population), need your help in using communication tools available to the hearing population.

- Ways you can help us are:
- 1) Adopting the Access Board's guidelines for both manufacturers and service providers. These guidelines must be a part of the designs for new equipment. Telecommunications equipment must be accessible to those people with a hearing loss. Telecommunication equipment is not readily usable for me and adhering to the congressional guidelines of the Access Board will make them accommodate my needs.
 - 2) Not allowing a company to determine if an accessibility feature will "pay for itself". Make it mandatory that telecommunication equipment in the future will meet the needs of people who suffer hearing loss. Telecoils are most important for people wearing hearing aids to hear! I depend on them in my home equipment and it will be necessary for mobile use!
 - 3) Extending the fast track resolution to 10 days with a maximum of 30 days. Continue the proposal not to require filing fees directed at manufacturers or service providers and waive such fees for formal complaints against common carriers. I need the right to lodge easily complaints of not being about to hear on the equipment.
 - 4) Putting a cap on complicated, fast moving automated voice response systems. These systems are complicated for the normal hearing person and impossible for the person with hearing loss. This issue is of critical importance in access under Section 255. Leaving out such services as a real live person severely limits educational and employment opportunities for the people with hearing loss and interferes with full participation in today's society.

Thank you for keeping these points in mind when reviewing Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996!

Carrie Welter

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