

Dear Sir or Madam;

I am 4th generation deaf, as a deaf person I understand we, the individuals have different preference of communication be it using ASL, signed English, oralism, written notes....Whether we wish to wear hearing aids or not, whether we have cochlear implants. If we have those rights to choose how we want to function in this hearing world as a minority, I feel that I should have the same opportunity when it comes to making relay calls.

I prefer using ip-relay and I have been using ip-relay for as long as I could remember, probably when it was first introduced to the deaf, long before videophone came into picture. I had to port to Purple ip-relay after Sorenson ip-relay stopped providing those services. Now Purple states that they will cease to provide ip-relay services on the 14th of this month. So I have to port again, this time to Spring relay which is the only provider left that provides ip-relay. I feel that this is unfair to me and to some who prefers this form of communication (making and receiving our calls to/from hearing callers)

I am a full time working mother with a child in school. I often have to make my calls during my working hours since those calls I make are usually to/from school, doctors, business places that obviously closes at certain hours and I won't be able to make them when I get home after work.

I share my cubicle with a coworker in an open space. There is not a way I can have videophone at my work, even if I download app to my phone, the phone coverage services is horrible at my work. I don't have access to the Wi-Fi. I don't have the privacy to make my calls. My job position is very fast paced, I cant take time off from working to be on videophone. I have two monitors, I am able to continue to work with while making ip-relay calls on my computer (monitor).

I implore you to reconsider and understand the importance of our rights to choose what form of communication applies to me, I don't think it's fair that we are FORCED to accept only ONE form of communication (making VRS calls).

I don't think FCC and VRS providers truly realizes that deaf community doesn't consist of deaf people who uses ASL as their only form of communication. Deaf community also include other "deaf people" such as those who were raised with Oralism as their only method of communication and has zero knowledge of sign language therefore VRS (through videophone) is USELESS to them. Ip-relay benefits those group of deaf people, in addition to those who lost their hearing late in their adulthood and again, does NOT know sign language. So let's not forget the other deaf people than just the deaf people that uses sign language. There are thousands of deaf people in general that does benefit from using ip-relay. So vp/vrs/vco are useless to them and loss of ip-relay truly impacts those people.

Not only forgetting certain groups of deaf people but come to think the situations that any deaf could be for instance, after electrical storm and power goes out, in case of emergency at night time. We are unable to use vp/vrs via wifi even if we have 4G available, it's still dark, unable to use vrs in dark.

Again, this is perfectly good example that happened to me 10 years ago, long before VRS was ever introduced. I had a car accident in country between two very small towns at 2am, That country road had NO streetlights, my car was badly totaled that the headlights nor interior dome light did not work at all. I was left stranded in dark. Let's say if at that time I had vrs app on my cellphone, it would have been useless because of no light. Now, if I had ip-relay, I would have easily made a call for help.

I also need to bring this up to attention which is very important, I am not sure if you're aware that we cannot use VRS in dark such as night time. There has to be some type of light turned on. So instead of making relay calls (ip-relay) from comfort of our bed or couch in dark, we are forced to get up and turn lights on to make vrs calls.

Again, I feel that VRS providers are forgetting the importance of options offered to deaf to chose whatever method of making calls applies to them and to the situations they are in. One thing I know for fact is VRS/VP is USELESS at nighttime and in dark period, that's where ip-relay comes in handy! It is easily used at any time of day, with or without electricity simply using 3G.

Again, I think everyone (VRS providers and FCC) are forgetting the importance of needing ip-relay in unique but common situations where VRS will not do.

I implore you to please reconsider keeping the ip-relay for all types of deaf people and varied situations where VRS/VP could not help us. This is very important!

--Deborah Hensley