

Anne Fesh

From: Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:01 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support video services

My name is Elizabeth Guile, I am blind and I reside at the mary Bryant Home for the Blind, 2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

Anne Fesh

From: Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:02 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

My name is Helen Haavind, I am blind and I reside at 2960 Stanton Ave.,
Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video
MM Docket No. 99-339

Anne Fesh

From: Monica Lederbrand [mbha@springnet1.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2000 8:03 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

My name is Matt Haavind, I am blind and i reside at the Mary Bryant Home for the Blind, 2960 Stanton Ave., Spfld., IL 62703. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339

Anne Fesh

From: Penny Reeder [preeder@acb.org]
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2000 12:45 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support video description

9504 Cape Anne Place
Montgomery Village, MD 20886
March 21, 2000

> The Honorable William E. Kennard, Chair
> Federal Communications Commission
> 445 Twelfth Street, S.W., TW-A325
> Washington, D.C. 20554
>

>Dear Chairman Kennard:

I am writing to thank you and your colleagues at the Federal Communications Commission for deciding to make rules requiring the major television networks to provide video description during prime-time programming for people who cannot access visual information on their tv screens (MM Docket No. 99-339). I am one of those people.

I understand that the FCC has received a number of negative comments on these proposed requirements, and I am writing to urge you to stay the course, so to speak, because video description will be so important to my generation of blind people and to those who will follow.

Understanding visual concepts is often quite difficult for visually impaired children. This difficulty can have enormous negative ramifications for their educational and social progress, and impede their real integration into mainstream American society thenceforth. When visual information can be understood and accessed easily, even blind children can grasp the meaning of the visual world. When these concepts can be taught as a matter of course--for instance, by watching the same television shows their peers and families are watching, blind children will learn the information they need to know to read, to understand, to fit in--painlessly, and, in fact, enjoyably. Video description can make this kind of learning possible.

Television is such a cultural index in our country. Whether or not one still defines the medium as a "vast wasteland," there is no denying that TV is the mechanism we Americans turn to, to define ourselves and to understand one another. Blind people have just as much need as any other Americans to experience this medium. Television has become a subtext to nearly everything we Americans do. Even though many people hesitate to admit that they become couch potatoes every evening as they unwind from their days' work

in front of their tubes, the networks know how important their television programs are to Americans, and so does everyone else.

Once video description for prime-time television programming becomes a reality, when friends and colleagues discuss the latest happenings on a video-described situation comedy like "friends," or a dramatic program like "ER," visually impaired people who will have experienced exactly the same information as their sighted colleagues will be able to join in those conversations, share those cultural experiences, and feel--finally--as though they belong.

Thank you for proposing rules which will require the networks to provide us with the same information which our sighted colleagues take so for granted! I hope that, notwithstanding the negative comments you have received from many of the same people who told you that providing closed captioning for people who are deaf would be too expensive, or difficult, or whatever--you will continue to recognize the importance of making the medium which catalogs, explains, and delineates our shared cultural experiences accessible to those of us who cannot always perceive it with our eyes.

A few weeks ago, I was traveling for business, and I found myself watching "ER" (NBC, Thursdays at 10:00 p.m.) alone in my hotel room. The week before, I had watched the show with my fourteen-year-old daughter. The show had ended with a crisis in progress, which I knew because my daughter had described all the crucial scenes for me.

When I watched the show alone in my hotel room, there were elements of the continuing story which I just could not figure out. Finally, feeling frustrated--and totally dependent--I called my daughter, at the end of the show, so she could tell me what had happened.

Now, this experience is not an earth-shattering one in the whole scheme of things. But, wouldn't it have been nice if I had not had to experience this lack of access and this need to depend on another person for such routine information? It will be so easy for the networks to screen me in, rather than out. Video description is really not very expensive. And, there are about twelve-million Americans who are visually impaired, like I am, who can benefit from this simple accessibility option.

Thank you for your tireless efforts to make information accessible to me, and to people like me.

Sincerely,

Penny Reeder
Editor, The Braille Forum
American Council of the Blind

Anne Fesh

From: Barbara Rhodes [brhodes@pacbell.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 16, 2000 12:41 AM
To: info@acb.org; Pam Brandin
Subject: I Support Descriptive Video Services

Dear Chairperson Kennar and Members of the FCC:

I am chairperson of the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) for the Peninsula Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (PCBVI). PCBVI is an agency that provides services for more than 1,000 consumers annually in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties in California.

I have polled the membership of the CAC and they requested me to send you a message of support for the proposed rule making for Descriptive Video Services.

Most of our membership is blind/visually impaired, or have a family member who is so impaired and we support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339.

Video description gives us access to the the visual information being shared, (It is so nice to know who kissed, hit, crashed into, bumped into, etc -- who gave who a touch, look, turn their back, etc. It is also nice to know who spilled something, knocked something over, what kind of costumes are being worn, who is wearing short-shorts, etc., etc -- all the nuances that are reflected visually, that give needed, meaningful information to the "flavor" of the presentation.

I respectfully suggest that each and every opponent to providing audio description make a commitment to disable the video portion of their television and watch programming they are not familiar with with only the audio information provided. I also suggest that they watch some of the PBS programming with descriptive video (still with the screen off). I believe if they did this for a week, or a month, they would become a major supporter of this readily achievable service. Until you walk in our shoes, you don't realize how much visual cues and information is received and is an important component of the program that must be shared either visually or by audio description.

The Federal Communications Commission has issued proposed rules to require increasing amounts of descriptive video on television. Over time, this would afford blind people expanding access to television programming much in the same way that our friends in the deaf community now enjoy closed captioning.

It is also imperative that during emergencies, that the information being "rolled" on the screen, be presented audibly. We cannot tell you how many times I have "heard an advertisement" (music and a few words), but didn't have a clue what was being shown/advertised. In reality, this is a disservice to all who don't have their eyes on the screen (i.e. persons who went to the kitchen during a commercial break to get a snack beverage, medication, etc). This could be a win-win situation for everyone. Providing the descriptive video gives the information to everyone who can't see the screen -- either because they can't see or they are not sitting in front of the screen.

Please continue your support for this needed accommodation.

Sincerely,

Barbara Rhodes
Chairperson
Consumer Advisory Committee
PENINSULA CENTER FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED
2470 El Camino Real

Palo Alto, CA
650 858-0202
brhodes@pacbell.net

Anne Fesh

From: PA Council of the Blind [pcb1@bellatlantic.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2000 1:31 AM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

From: John A. Horst
To: Info

I, John A. Horst, 249 Holly St., Elizabethtown, PA 17022, am a legally blind person. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339.

Descriptive Video is important for all blind people. They, like any other American, need full access to all video broadcasting. This is not possible without descriptive video.



Anne Fesh

From: DREAMANGEL [dreamangel1980@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2000 2:34 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support Descriptive Video Services.

Janice Sloan
4940 Penrose AVE.
Fort Worth, TX 76116
(817) 763-8657

Do You Yahoo!?
Talk to your friends online with Yahoo! Messenger.
<http://im.yahoo.com>

Anne Fesh

From: Jeanette M Schmoyer [jmschmoyer@juno.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 4:16 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support DVS

Dear members of the FCC:

I am writing to support the implementation of descriptive audio services on television and movies.

AS a visually impaired person whose acuity is measured at 2/2000, watching TV or movies is exclusively an audio experience for me. As you can imagine, in most instances, the story line is lost through many silences and music only interludes during a show or movie. In addition, there is no way to determine those subtle movements or facial expressions that say so much in a story line. DVS, a descriptive audio service fills those gaps for a person who is blind or visually impaired. It is a matter of equal access for many citizens in this country. A growing number of the people as the population of the elderly increases, are losing vision and would benefit from these services.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,
Jeanette M. Schmoyer

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<http://dl.www.juno.com/get/tagj>.

Anne Fesh

From: E. M. Kirtley [ekirtley@tnl-online.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 7:11 PM
To: Info@acb.org
Subject: descriptive video

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wholly support the idea of receiving all movies in descriptive video. I have no vision, and have never been able to enjoy movies until now. The first I ever experienced was at a convention. As i say I am totally blind, and support "MM Docket number 99-339."

My mailing address is P.O. Box 16984, San Diego California 92176-6984. Thank you for your consideration.

Mrs. Ethel. M. Kirtley

Anne Fesh

From: Barbara Lombardi [k1eir@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 7:48 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video service

Attn: FCC: I'm Barbara Lombardi, a totally blind person residing at 212 Soundview Avenue, Shelton, Ct. 06484. Part of my enjoyment is watching TV and have had the experience of watching some documentaries plus movies through descriptive video broadcasts. There is truly nothing like it for one who cannot see the screen! It offers those of us without sight the opportunity to gain a fuller dimension of the broadcast and most importantly, the visual information becomes accessible to us through the narrative description. I've been told that even people with sight enjoy it and benefit from it.

In America today, there are increasing numbers of men and women over 65 who have difficulty with their sight. Descriptive video would be a valuable asset to a great number in our population. I strongly support docket mm number 99339.
Barb kleir@att.net

Anne Fesh

From: janelle edwards [jedwards@flintheills.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 8:50 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video
Importance: High

I am blind and support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339. My reasons will follow.

I am totally blind and have been so all of my life. The description of costumes and scenery is not important to me. I realize that these things may be important to other blind people though.

I can also follow many sitcoms without assistance. There are times in sitcoms though when I wonder why the audience members laughed. Sometimes I wonder what happened as the story was not complete and I only heard music until the show ended. Description of these types of moments would help me follow such shows much more accurately.

Action packed shows are even harder for me to follow. For example, at the end of the show a shot rang out. Who shot who? Did the intended victim die? Here is another example. The would be murderer traps the victim in a place with rising water, or that is burning, etc. How did the person escape (we know that he did from subsequent dialogue). These are just three of the many frustrations that I have experienced while listening to television programs.

Please help me to encounter less of this frustration, and more of the same level of enjoyment that my sighted friends experience when they watch TV.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Janelle Edwards

Anne Fesh

From: Al and Eunice [makdog@interfold.net]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 10:49 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

This e-mail is to include three of us and our support of descriptive video. We are Al and Eunice Alton at 3100 South Corona Street, Englewood, Co 80110 and Dale Alton 3352 West Laurel Lane, Littleton, co 80123. We want it to be known that we fully support descriptive video for all blind individuals. All three of us are blind people who feel that we each have a right to express our own thoughts independently and not have some organization like the Federation tell us or others what we think.

Thank you for this opportunity to voice our independent feelings on this subject. If the Federation does not wish to take advantage of such a service, that is their choice just as it is ours to choose to use it if we want.

Al, Eunice and Dale Alton

Anne Fesh

From: Kathey Wheeler [katheylw@primenet.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 11:55 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support Descriptive Video

Gentlemen:

Descriptive Video allows me, a blind person, to enjoy television independently. With DVS, when nobody who can see is in the room, I am able to know why the tv audience is laughing.

I thoroughly enjoy knowing what color somebody's dress is and when he kisses her.

I hope you will make every effort to continue descriptive video. It brings fun to life.

Kathey Wheeler, 3612 South Forest Avenue, Independence, Missouri 64052.

Thank You,

Kathey Wheeler

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katheylw@primenet.com _ _ I) I) IIII_ \ T I_ T
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Anne Fesh

From: Michelle McGrew [mcgrew@rahul.net]
Sent: Saturday, March 18, 2000 11:56 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

Silicon Valley Council of the Blind
P. O. Box 493
Mountain View, CA 94042-493
March 18, 2000

To the Federal Communications Commission:

We, the Silicon Valley Council of the Blind, wish to express our support of the proposed rules for descriptive video service as described in MM Docket No. 99-339. As one of the largest chapters of the California Council of the Blind, we represent over 60 members, most of whom are blind or visually impaired.

Attached is a copy of a resolution supporting the proposed rules which we passed at our meeting today.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Michelle McGrew, President
Phone: (408) 737-2050

Resolution in Support of Descriptive Video Service
to be transmitted to the Federal Communications Commission
>From the Silicon Valley Council of the Blind
a chapter of the California Council of the Blind
And an affiliate of the American Council of the Blind

Whereas the Federal Communications Commission has published proposed rules making audio description of video content, often referred to as "Descriptive Video Service," a recognized method of providing equal access, insofar as possible, to television content by people who are blind or visually impaired, and

Whereas this proposed rule mandates such description on a limited number of hours of commercial television programming, and

Whereas the Commission has requested comments on this proposed rule under MM Docket No. 99-339, and

Whereas the technical feasibility of descriptive video service has been well established by the Public Broadcasting Service and several other programmers, and

Whereas there is a precedent for such an access requirement in the closed captioning provided for people who are deaf or hearing impaired, in which case the FCC required modifications to set manufacture as well as hours of programming, and

Whereas we, the members of the Silicon Valley Council of the Blind, are familiar with the benefits of description in various contexts, a number of us having attended many plays and other events with description, now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Silicon Valley Council of the Blind in regular monthly

meeting assembled, this 18th day of March, 2000, in the city of Mountain View, in the state of California, that we support the FCC's proposed rule and pledge ourselves to work for the implementation of Descriptive Video Service in whatever ways are in our power, and be it further

Resolved that we support the testimony and representations of the leadership and staff of the American Council of the Blind in this matter.

Silicon Valley Council of the Blind

Michelle McGrew, President

Mike Keithley, Recording Secretary

Anne Fesh

From: jeanne l donovan [nsshead3@juno.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 3:28 AM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

My name is Jeanne Donovan. I live at 548 Hadley West Drive, Haverhill, MA 01832. I am Blind. I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket #99-339.

Thank you

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<http://dl.www.juno.com/get/tagj>.

Anne Fesh

From: Jennifer Dubbin [jdubbin@uswest.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 6:02 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

I am blind and I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No.99-339.

Jennifer Dubbin
136 Western Ave. S.
St. Paul, MN 55102
jdubbin@yahoo.com

Anne Fesh

From: JEckert584@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 2:01 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

I am blind and president of the Augusta Chapter of the Georgia Council of the Blind. According to the 1990 census there are approximately 10,000 blind and vision impaired persons in Augusta, GA. Our group has been working on this issue for the past year with local TV stations and cable company. As a group we strongly support proposed descriptive video rules under MM docket number 99-339.

Jack T. Eckert, President
122 Kings Chapel Road
Augusta, GA 30907

Anne Fesh

From: Mike keithley [MKeithley@compuserve.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 2:13 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

I support descriptive video!

Hello

Name: Mike Keithley

Address: 191 E El Camino Real #150
Mountain View California 94040

This message is in support of Descriptive Video Services under MM Docket number 99-339.

I am blind and have experienced the thrill of knowing what's going on in videos and NPR broadcasts that use Descriptive Video Services.

Thank you

Anne Fesh

From: Roger D. Petersen [petersen@svpal.org]
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 3:00 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support Descriptive Video Service

In the matter of MM Docket 99-339,

My name is Roger D. Petersen and I live at 2211 Latham Street, #120, Mountain View, CA 94040.

I am writing in support of the FCC's proposed rule making Audio Description, or Descriptive Video Service a part of commercial television programming as an access measure for people who have visual impairments.

I have listened to descriptions in movies, television and live theater, and I can say without equivocation that description adds greatly to the understanding and enjoyment of all these media by blind and visually impaired people. Furthermore, PBS and Narrative Television Network, among others, have demonstrated the technical and aesthetic feasibility of description.

If I may cite as a precedent the provision of closed captioning for the deaf community, I think it is a reasonable analogy to follow this precedent in the type of gradual fashion that the Commission has proposed. Furthermore, in the case of closed captioning, there was a requirement to modify set manufacture. This may be required in this case as well, since on most currently available sets, a blind person cannot independently access the SAP channel, as it is done through onscreen menus.

One additional point I feel compelled to make is that as a former member of the National Federation of the Blind, I can testify that there is a sharp contrast between the decision making process in NFB as compared to ACB. Policy in NFB is dictated by a leadership group from an ideological perspective, rather than by assessing the opinions of the rank and file membership.

In the American Council of the Blind, on the other hand, an organization of more or less equivalent size, resolutions are presented by the membership to the resolutions committee and the organization's constitution requires that the committee bring all of them to the floor, where they are handled democratically.

In closing, let me say that the leadership and staff of the American Council of the Blind who testify and otherwise advise the Commission represent me.

Thank you for your attention,

Roger Petersen

Anne Fesh

From: Patricia Ellis [robin308@ime.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 3:50 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: "I support descriptive video"

Pat Ellis
RR 7 BOX 962
Augusta, ME 04330
I support descriptive video per MM Docket No. 99-339. I am blind and a member of ACB.

Anne Fesh

From: Red167@aol.com
Sent: Sunday, March 19, 2000 5:52 PM
To: info@acb.org
Subject: I support descriptive video

My name is Allen Jones. I am legally blind and my address is:
P.O. Box 70046
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-0046

I support the FCC proposed rules for descriptive video MM Docket No. 99-339, because I rent and buy descriptive videos. I really enjoy them and feel I should have the same opportunity to enjoy these services on regular TV.

Thank you.

Allen Jones