Re Docket No 99-339

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Dear Sir, NOV 9 - 2000

I am submitting my comments in opposition to the various Petitioners for Reconsideration of the Reported Order on Video description.

I am so looking forward to turning on my TV in April 2002 & being able to understand what is going on. To help you understand how the blind get so frustrated trying to watch T.V. Please turn your sets on - then close your eyes. See how much you can tell about what is going on by sound. That is why I was so very happy with your July 21st ruling. It is such a boon to us blind and visually impaired people. There are so many of us. We appreciate your help.

Thank you

John D Irish
9310 W Wildhorse
Sun City AZ 85373

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Mr. & Mrs. Wm. S. Zimmermann
18 Birch Ter.
Montvale, NJ 07645-2639

November 2, 2000

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NOV 0 9 2000
FCC MAIL ROOM

Ms. M. Salas, Secretary
Fed. Communications Commission
445 12th St SW.
Washington, DC. 20552

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for thinking of visual impaired people who cannot see the screen but love to "watch" & listen to TV. There are opposition to people who feel this would not benefit blind people. My husband is blind now 36 years from a car accident & loves to "listen" — Please do ALL you can to have a video description of certain TV programs. Docket No - 99 - 339. This pertains to.

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Thanking you in advance,
Sincerely,
Beatrice T. Zimmermann
RN, MA, CSW

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL Docket No 97-339

NOV 9 2000
FCC MAIL ROOM

Dear Mr Salas 11-5-00

I am writing this letter in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description. I would like to say that it would be a wonderfull thing to have video description on television! Maybe I can be farther away from the TV (more than 2 ft) and know what is still going on! Please Mr Salas please make the television industry put video description on TV. It will help so many people. We count on you to help us.

Sincerely
Alan Kaltman
8061 Chatham Rd
Medina, Ohio 44256
330-667-3231

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DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

73 Sixth Street
Hicksvville,, N. Y. 11801
November 6, 2000

Ms. Magalie Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

RE: Docket Number 99-339

Dear Ms. Salas:

I am writing to ask the FCC not to review its decision to require television networks to provide video description on a percentage of their programs. I am a blind person, and I want to know as much as possible about the visual portions of programs that I cannot see. If there are blind people who feel that video description is unnecessary, they do not have to use it. However, for those of us who feel that we will benefit from it, it will place us on a somewhat equal footing with sighted viewers. This privilege should not be denied to us. I know that, in my years of listening to television programs, I have missed a great deal of information which would have helped me to better understand and enjoy the programs.

As for the television industry, it is natural for the networks to oppose some additional expense that they will have to absorb. Yet they are supposed to be operating in the public interest under their FCC licenses, and those of us who are blind are members of the public. Note, too, that the size of the blind population is growing.

I urge the Commission not to back down in any way from its ruling on video description.

Sincerely,

Paul Sauerland

Paul Sauerland

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Choices & resources for people who are blind or low vision

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Envision

PLEASE REPLY TO: Michael Byington, Director
Envision Governmental Affairs Office
924 S. Kansas Ave
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 354-4747 (Topeka Office)
(785) 640-4500 (pager and mobil)
(785) 354-4646 (FAX)
mbyingto@ink.org or
michael.byington@envisionus.com

November 1, 2000

Magalie Sales, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Secretary Sales:

RE: DOCKET 99-339

OFFICIAL FILING: IN OPPOSITION TO THE PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION ON THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION

This filing is submitted on behalf of Envision, a not for profit corporation which provides employment, rehabilitation and advocacy services for persons who are blind or who have low vision. This filing is also submitted with the very strong personal convictions of its author. I am a legally blind citizen, who is married to a person who is totally blind. As the Director of Governmental Affairs

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2301 S. Water • Wichita, KS 67213-4819
Tel 316.267.2244 • Fax 316.267.4312
Web http://www.envisionus.com

for Envision, I am empowered to express the position of this corporation.

Envision submitted testimony supporting the original ruling generated through DOCKET 99-339. We continue to support the rules which resulted from this Docket.

We want to begin by thanking and commending the Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for their courageous vote to require modest, beginning amounts of video description through major networks, large cable providers, and large sellers of satellite broadcast services. We who are blind and low vision must indeed have the right to equally effective communications of all types. We can not fully participate in the culture of the United States, or the world, without these accommodations. We must never be relegated to being a population only entitled to certain types of communication, Access to communications for purposes of entertainment must never be considered to be of lesser importance than communications for purposes of emergency or news related information. It is all important. We need access to all information offered in the American culture. Video description is an excellent vehicle for providing important pieces of information otherwise completely missed by those persons who are blind and low vision. The regulations adopted in July concerning video description are most certainly consistent with the spirit of both the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act.

THE PETITIONS FOR RECONSIDERATION ARE UTTERLY WITHOUT FOUNDATION. No new information has been submitted to provide justification for a re-opening of Docket 99-339. The cable, network, and motion picture industrial representatives, and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) have instead provided essentially a re-statement of arguments thoroughly explored through the original scrutiny of 99-339, and by the FCC deliberations which lead to the July vote.

As a legally blind person, I have become aware of how much of the significance of television programming I miss because I often watch television productions

with my wife, who is totally blind, and/or totally blind friends and co-workers. On such occasions, the question I fear most from my blind associates is, "What's happening now?" I usually find that I am not really sure enough to be able to explain it. In Kansas, which is the principle catchment area for Envision, we are also aware of the benefit of video description, and I am personally aware of how much I miss of programming, because we do have a limited amount of video description available to us through most of the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) stations in Kansas. As a person who is congenitally legally blind, I never knew about all of the action and nuances I was missing until video description made this information available.

The argument of some of the motion picture associations, that people who are congenitally blind can not benefit from video description because they have no visual frame of reference, is a ludicrous assertion which could not be further from the truth. To the contrary, such individuals often benefit profoundly from video description because it fills in information they have no other way of getting. If the blindness is congenital, then the information is particularly important because a lack of history of seeing indeed makes it more difficult to make informed assumptions about what may be happening.

It has also been alleged throughout the processes involved with Docket 99-339 that video description somehow violates the First Amendment rights of the artists by somehow altering the fundamental nature of the art. This too is an argument which defies logic and common sense. Video description does not change the fundamental nature of a performing arts piece any more than moving a painting from a gallery which is not wheelchair accessible to one which is accessible alters the fundamental nature of the painting. Also, video description is a voluntary accommodation. Someone who does not wish to hear it, or who believes that the description is altering the original art form, has the option to simply turn the video description track off and still enjoy the art in its original form.

One of the major objections of the NFB, which is driving them to petition for the reconsideration of the regulations, seems to be their concern that the cues for

emergency information do not go far enough. While we at Envision must agree in our support for a full and true reading of emergency information via the separate audio program (SAP) convention, we would submit that NFB is using a destructive and counterproductive methodology to attempt to bring this access about. NFB should not jeopardize access to information which we need and fought long and hard to get, simply because there is some other type of information access which they feel is needed even more.

The NFB petition thus might be regarded constructively as a petition for a new and additional rulemaking on the issue of emergency information. As stated earlier, however, we can not support undoing another type of information access simply because a few people want a different type of information access first. We need all types of information. There should be no process of prioritization. Asking for additional types of information should not negate, or be considered as related to, types of information which the FCC has already agreed should be provided.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. Please reject in their entirety, all petitions for reconsideration of Docket 99-339.

Sincerely yours:

Michael Byington
Director of Governmental Affairs

MB/mb

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FCC MAIL ROOM

99-339

Magalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington DC 20554

Reference: Docket No. 99-339

IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION:

As a blind woman I truly appreciate your ruling on July 21, 2000 that require video description for television programming starting in April 2002. I cannot express the anticipation that I feel to be able to more fully participate in the many aspects of television viewing that I have only partially been able to enjoy up to now.

I do not understand why the National Federation of the Blind has joined program providers in "Petitions to Reconsider" your decision. I'm sure that the program providers are concerned about the cost. However, the blind are also consumers and purchasers of advertised products, and the availability of this service will, I am sure, increase our viewing of both programs and commercials. I am also unaware of any additional information or factors that you did not consider when approving video descriptions.

I urge you to continue your support for video descriptions and the benefits it will bring to the blind community. I know that it will greatly enhance my enjoyment of a medium that sighted people take for granted, but that I and others cannot.

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opposition to reconsideration of your decision mandating video description of television programming.

Robin C. Rehder
23 Manor Ave.
Baltimore MD 21206

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ROD LAWSON 8827 South Rice Ave. Houston, TX 77096

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FCC MAIL ROOM

November 4, 2000

MAGALIE SALAS, secretary
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
145 12TH Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

docket #99-339

Dear Secretary,

I am blind and wish to thank the FCC for its ruling in favor of the thousands of blind people who might wish to better enjoy television through video description.

Video description is hopelessly limited at present.

I pray that you will be able to stand firm on this issue during your upcoming meeting with television executives.

Sincerely,

Rod Lawson

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have any questions. Vanguard will accept wire transfers, but will NOT accept electronic transfers. Please make this document a part f my application.

MARINE MIDLAND BANK
FRB ABA# 021001088
atte[redacted] incoming wire
AC# [redacted]
fund [redacted]
Our AC # [redacted]
Martha P[redacted]on

NOTE : Marine Midland bank recently changed its name only to HSBC BANK USA .
All of the above information is still correct.

ROD LAWSON
BANK AMERICA
8827 S. Rice, Ave.
Houston, TX 77096 2621

BANK AMERICA will accept electronic transfers
ABA# 111000025
Account of BILLY e. OR PAGE LAWSON
OUR ac# 6050947040

Free I

*Magalie Salas, Secretary
FCC
145 12th St. SW
WASHINGTON, DC. 20554

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FCC MAIL ROOM

Dear Magalie Salas
all the Blind people need help
on Video Descryption so Tell what
is going on Docket No. 99-339.
Because we all need help.

Thank you
Your Truly

Marguerite Smith

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[illegible] 7. [illegible] Ave
Ambridge, PA 15003
Nov. 4, 2000

Magalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Trade Comm.

I am writing on behalf of my visually impaired and blind friends who are unable to write to you themselves. We [illegible]
that there are petitions of reconciliations being submitted to your office by the TV, Cable and Motion Picture Assoc. and by the National Federation of the Blind. Why the last one is opposed to this, is beyond us. Maybe the few don't need any help, but the majority of us do. To the majority video description is very important. So please do your utmost to keep the FCC July vote. The vote is more appreciated than most people realize. Help for our problems is hard to come by. Must we always beg? It is a small thing for the industry to provide for us, but a necessary service for us to receive.
Please keep Docket # 99-339 the way it was voted in.

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Respectfully yours,
Gladys Blanarik, Vice.
Beaver County Blind Assoc.

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1950 Heights Blvd
apt 804
Houston, Tx 77008
Nov 6, 2000

Magalie Salas Secretary
The Federal Communication Commission
445 12th St, SW
Washington DC. 20554

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NOV - 9 2000
FCC MAIL

Dear Sir;

Reference Docket No. 99-339

While I am not totally blind, like some of my friends, I appreciate commissioner of the FCC courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing this essential information service to people who are blind and visually impaired.

My letter is in opposition of petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description.

Thank you for your consideration

Sincerely yours,
Sandy Manley

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DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Larry W. Heath
P.O. Box 608
Chilhowie, VA 24319

Subject: DOCKET NO. 99-339

FCC Commissioners,

I would like to express my appreciation to you for voting in July to require TV networks to begin provinding descriptive services for those of us with vision problems. Just as Closed Captioning makes it possible for those with hearing impairments to enjoy television, Video description enables the visually impaired the same opportunity.

I have been able to obtain video descriptive programs from the library service. By watching these I have really gotten a sense of how important this type service is for folks who cannot see the screen. It makes watching TV much more enjoyable.

I urge you to deny the petition to reconsider, as undertaken by the Television industry. As no new information has been brought forth since your vote, I feel that your decision should stand as is. This video descriptive service is vital to our future television enjoyment. I am writing to express my OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION.

As a visually impaired person, I urge you to make this service a reality.

Thank you,

Larry W. Heath

Larry W. Heath

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Bill George
123 Milton St.
San Francisco, CA 94112

Nov. 4, 2000

Magalie Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Docket No. 99-339
Comments in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on Video Description.

Sirs;

I want to thank the FCC Commissioners for their votes requiring the TV networks to provide information services to people with visual impairments. Also I think this ruling benefits the general public and especially older persons who may miss slight visual plot aspects of a program, that if Video Described would make the story so much more enjoyable.

To a person with little or no vision it is essential that an alternative means of knowing what's happening on the television be provided. I have watched many movies with video description and it is wonderful. I believe the technology is available for the TV networks to implement video description and I am looking forward to watching and enjoying TV with video description. The TV networks in their petition for reconsideration have not provided any new information since the FCC issued its original ruling on video description. Therefor I hope the Commissioners will reaffirm their ruling on Video Description.

Thanks
Bill George

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tMagalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

99-339

November 6, 2000

RE: Docket # 99-3339

Dear Secretary Salas,

This letter is IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION.

I am writing on behalf of The Talking Book Library Advisory Council which represents the 1800 consumers of Central MA who use Talking Book materiels to thank the FCC for its July 21, 2000, position regarding video description for television programming and to urge the FCC to stand firm in its position and to move forward with implementation.

Those of us who are blind/visually impaired recognize that much information is conveyed via the television and yet, other than some limited Public Broadcasting Services programming, we have no access to the non-audio portions of commercial programming. Some of this information is important to our health and safety as well as information to assist us in being informed consumers.

Once again, thank you for the FCC position and we look forward with optimism to the implementation of video description.

Sincerely,

Sharon Latka Davis

Sharon Latka Davis
Chairperson/consumer, Talking Book Library (Worcester) Advisory Council

Maureen Moylan, Vice Chair, Senior Day Care representative
Mary Haroyan, Secretary, Vision Community Services/consumer
Cornelia Dillon, consumer
Donna Harris, Vision Community Services
Susan Matola, consumer
Jeff McAuslin, Easter Seal Society representative
George S. McDermott, legislative liaison/consumer
Jo-An Mszanski, consumer
Virginia Nagle, senior advocate/consumer
Carol J. Potter, Visiting Nurses Assoc. of Central MA
Elizabeth Soderholm, rehabilitation specialist for blind/visually impaired/consumer
Sharon Strzalkowski, Center for Living and Working/consumer
Jeanne Tarallo, nursing homes activities director

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John Usinas, MA Commission for the Blind/consumer
James Izatt, Talking Book Library Director (ex officio)

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT ASHEVILLE

November 6, 2000

Ms. Magalie Salas, Secretary
The Federal Communication Commission
445 12th Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Docket No. 99-339

Dear Ms. Salas:

I want to commend the Commissioners of the FCC for the July decision to demand that video description be provided for broadcasts. This will be a great thing for visually impaired people. However, I was saddened to hear that some special interests were lobbying to get you to reconsider this important decision. I am submitting comments in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description.

It is frustrating to visually impaired individuals to watch a program for 50 minutes only to wonder what happens at the end because the ending was "visual." This may not seem like a very important issue to some people, but it is part of the daily series of events that conspire to wear down the spirit and discourage those who have visual impairments. Every day there are countless things that visually impaired people cannot do that many people take for granted in their daily activities. Every day, over and over again, visually impaired people are confronted with the abject realization that they cannot participate in society as others do. The long-term effects of these are discouraging and depressing. It is good for the visually impaired individuals, and good for society, for visually impaired individuals to be motivated and included whenever possible instead of actively excluding them from everyday activities. I think that it is important that the FCC not reconsider the July ruling, since this would be an outright act of exclusion. I implore you to go forward with video description as planned.

Sincerely,

Duane H. Davis
Assistant Professor of Philosophy

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PHILOSOPHY
108 Carmichael Hall, CPO #1610
The University of North Carolina at Asheville
One University Heights
Asheville, NC 28804-8505

828/251-6413
Fax 828/251-6385
State Courier 12-61-01

The University of North Carolina at Asheville is one of the 16 senior institutions of The University of North Carolina and is committed to equality of employment and educational opportunity.

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NOV - 9 2000

FCC MA

460 Raintree Ct., #3K
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137
November 1, 2000

Ms. Magali Salas, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Secretary Salas:

The commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on September 11, 2000 recognized that I as a person who is blind have an equal right to information and entertainment on television by issuing a final rule, Docket 99-339, requiring that video description be provided for prime time television programming starting in 2002. I would like to thank the commissioners for taking this bold step toward providing me and others who are blind or visually impaired equal access to television broadcasting.

Video description will allow me to sit down with my family, watch a television program or movie and not have to rely on someone sitting with me to describe what is happening on the screen. We will all be able to enjoy the program. I have enjoyed video described movies made available through Descriptive Video Service in my home. I have watched two movies, "Top Gun" and "Three Men and a Baby" with and without video description. I enjoyed these movies much more with description because I knew everything that was happening on the screen. I knew what costumes the actors and actresses were wearing and what the setting of each scene was like. This is information people who can see always know when watching a movie and they take it for granted. Why should I as a person who is blind be denied access to that information? The FCC showed on September 11 that it believes I should not be denied equal access to that information in television programming.

I have also been privileged to watch two movies at a local theater where the DVS Theatrical ™ system is installed. This system allowed me to wear headphones which, through infrared technology, were receiving video descriptions made for each of the movies, "The Mask of Zoro" and "Hanging Up." My wife, who is also blind, and I thoroughly enjoyed our outings to the theater to see these movies thanks to the availability of video description.

ON October 11, the FCC received petitions from the broadcast industry and the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) urging reconsideration of the rules requiring video description on prime time television. I strongly urge that these petitions be rejected because they do not present any new arguments which the commission has not already considered.

Broadcasters raise concerns about the cost of video description. These are similar to concerns raised some ten years ago when requirements for closed captioning of tv programming first came out. Now, 90% of tvb programs are closed captioned and we do not hear broadcasters complaining about the cost. The cost of video description is minimal when compared to the revenue broadcasters and program producers derive from tv programming.

The NFB's petition for reconsideration asserts that requirements for video description have been placed ahead of requiring verbal announcements of emergency information being scrolled across television screens accompanied by only a beep tone. While this is certainly a valid concern, the fact is solutions to make this emergency information available in a verbal format still need to be identified. Video description has been available on public broadcasting stations and home videos for about ten years or so and in movie theaters for at least two and a half years. While the NFB's assertions regarding emergency announcements need to be given serious consideration, the commission should not delay implementation of the requirements for video description on prime time television.

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Video description is a proven method of making the visual elements of movies and other tv programming accessible to people like me who are blind or visually impaired. I thank the commission once again for recognizing that I and others who are blind or visually impaired have for two long been denied access to television programs. Please do not delay the implementation of the requirements for video description on prime time tv programs based on the petitions for reconsideration you have received as they present no valid arguments that would warrant such a delay or other reconsideration of the applicable final rule issued September 11, Docket 99-339.

Thank you for your time, attention, and for the commission's recognition of my right to access information and entertainment on television. I will be watching what happens very closely.

Sincerely,

Ray Campbell

Cc (Electronically): Disability Rights Office, Federal Communications Commission
American Council of the Blind e-mail list