

November 13, 2000

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Magalie Salas  
Secretary of Federal Communications Commission  
445-12 the Street S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 205554

Dear Mr. Salas;

As a blind person, I wish to receive descriptive talking videos, movies and programming in all forms of television, local, cable, satellite, and any other technique that is available. I enjoy the Video description film we now are able to receive from the Library system.

The blind and visually impaired should have the right to hear descriptive programming as do the hearing impaired have the right to see the programs. We are very happy they are able to have the programming. We did not ask to have a seeing problems and deserve to have the same privileges as a sighted person. We are finding that each day more people, as they grow older are experiencing more macular generation, glaucoma, and sight loss from diabetes, as well as accidents and other illnesses.

It is my understanding that file docket # 99-339 is to do away with the decision made on July 21, 2000 in which we the blind and visually impaired were to have descriptive television, videos etc. by April 2002.

I am asking you to vote to continue to provide and add more descriptive talking programming for the blind and visually impaired. If you were to view one, you as a sighted person would find they are very enjoyable.

Thanking you in advance for helping us to enjoy talking programming.

Sincerely yours,

*Thomas W. Street, Jr.*  
111 W Connington Ave  
Peoria, IL 61604  
cc: Honable Ray Lahood

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## DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

**From:** gene Spurrier <gene-5@home.com>  
**To:** <access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Tue, Nov 7, 2000 7:01 PM  
**Subject:** Video description for blind

m. Eugene Spurrier  
1522 Glen Keith Blvd,  
Baltimore Maryland, 21286  
November 6, 2000

Re: docket number 99339

To whom it may concern,

Please consider this letter my official statement in opposition to petitioners' requests for reconsideration of the reported order on video description issued by the Federal Communications Commission on July 21, 2000.

I am a 72 year old blind man who has spent many years of frustration with my television set because on countless occasions I was unable to determine the outcome of shows in which I was involved due to the lack of verbal commentary at crucial junctures in the play or movie, as the case may have been.

For these reasons it is not hard to imagine how elated I was when the Commissioners handed down their courageous vote in the affirmative regarding the provision of video description of television programming for the blind and visually impaired on July 21, 2000. I am aware from my limited exposure to video description that this decision on the part of the Commissioners will greatly enhance the pleasure that those of us who are blind will enjoy when watching television, either alone, or with our families and friends because we will be as knowledgeable as they are regarding what is transpiring on the screen.

Now, suddenly, it appears that this new freedom to enjoy movies and tv shows on equal footing with our sighted friends in the community may be taken away because of petitions for reconsideration of the July 21 order submitted by television, cable, and movie associations.

It is my understanding that these petitioners have not provided any information to the Commission which was not already available at the time the ruling was made some four months ago. Therefore, there does not appear to be any reason why the Commission should honor the petitioners' requests for reconsideration of the order.

The value of video descriptions to blind and visually impaired people cannot be over estimated; and, as an individual who plans to take full advantage of its availability, I wish personally to thank the Commissioners for the positive stand they have taken regarding this matter. Further, I request that nothing be done to alter the content of the ruling of July 21 2000.

Sincerely yours,

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20541

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B

M. Eugene Spurrier

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**From:** <DavidG214@aol.com>  
**To:** <Access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Tue, Nov 7, 2000 8:04 PM  
**Subject:** Docket No. 99-339

Attn. Magalie Salas, Secretary  
The Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Docket No. 99-339/  
Disability Rights, video description

I wish to impress upon the commission my appreciation of the courageous vote by the commissioners requiring that the networks begin providing the essential video descriptions of network programs to the visually impaired. Without these descriptions, those of us who cannot see the television screens properly are not able to follow the network programs and lose out on the information that we need to perform our civic functions within our communities.

I feel that the petitioners for reconsideration have not provided any new or pertinent information beyond that which was previously considered at the time that the FCC reached its original decision and issued its ruling. I oppose any changes that the petitioners may present. I am writing this letter on behalf of myself and other who are legally blind and who may not be able to correspond with you appropriately.

Signed,  
Aleck R. Rafolovich

This letter is being sent to you by David Gomez on behalf of Aleck Rafolovich.

CC: <info@acb.org>

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

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**From:** "MariGriffin" <marig@bitstream.net>  
**To:** <access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Thu, Nov 9, 2000 1:12 AM  
**Subject:** MM Docket 99-339

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Television is an integral part of American culture - and people who are blind are denied access to this culture without Video Description. They are then disadvantaged with their sighted peers. That's discrimination!

Count this as a vote in opposition of reconsideration of reported order on Video Description - July ruling. No new information was submitted that was not known at the time of the ruling. Don't continue the obstacle of undescribed TV.

---

Mari Griffin  
marig@bitstream.net

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Television is an integral part of American culture - and people who are blind are denied access to this culture without Video Description. They are then disadvantaged with their sighted peers. That's discrimination! Count this as a vote in opposition of reconsideration of reported order on Video Description - July ruling. No new information was submitted that was not known at the time of the ruling. Don't continue the obstacle of undescribed TV. --- Mari Griffin  
[marig@bitstream.net](mailto:marig@bitstream.net)

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CONCERNING DOCKET NO 99-339,  
SOME RESPONSES IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE  
REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION

The following organizations and individuals sent comments to the FCC in this Docket via the Disabilities Rights Office (DRO) at the FCC electronic mail box (174 total).

Old Dominion Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired, Richmond, VA  
Low Vision Support Group of Friendship Village, Tempe AZ (multiple signers)  
Byron K. Smith, Producer, IU Office of Communications & Marketing, Indiana  
Missouri Council of Blind  
Envision Govt Affairs Office, Topeka, KS  
Disabled Resource Services, Loveland  
Northern Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, Fort Collins, CO  
Jonathan Avila, Bartimaeus Group  
Jostad Associates, Fort Collins, CO  
Karen Blumhorst, St Marys, OH  
Patricia Southwell, Orange Park, FL  
Jennifer Cunningham, OTR/L, Tennessee  
Jeanie Hugel, South Milwaukee, WI  
Will Herzog, Rochester, NY  
Ed Meskys, Center Harbor, NH  
Judy McClarren, advocate  
Linda Lewis, Raleigh, NC  
Brian Lewis, Raleigh, NC  
Frank Helman, Elkhart, IN  
M. Eugene Spurrier, Baltimore, MD  
Chet Avery, Alexandria, VA  
Lorraine DeRose Demchak, Detroit, MI  
David Gomez for Aleck Rafolocish, CA  
Silas Johnson, STAR Center, Tennessee  
Joanne Martin, Dodge City, KS  
Gail Elaine Irons, Phoenix, AZ  
Janis Stander, Salt Lake City, UT  
Frank Warner, Sr., Walla Walla, WA  
Clarence Jackson, Ventura, CA  
Judith Sterling, Babylon, NY  
Robert Barnes, Seattle, WA  
Shron Bryant MS, CTRS, OTR, LaCrosse, WI  
Brad Kadel, History Instructor, Luther College  
Joseph & Velma Calandra, Springfield, IL  
Gerald Mundy, Ed.D.,  
Phyllis Williams, Fletcher, NC  
Sylvia Kashdan, Seattle, WA  
Sharon Fillion, Agawam, MA  
Anne Parsons  
Lori Miller, Paralympic athlete  
Denyse J. Eddy, Winter Park, FL  
Ptience Blumemr Barnes, Researcher, Wabash College  
Laura Oftedahl, Berkeley, CA  
Tony Swatz, Allentown, PA  
Robin Rehder, Baltimore, MD  
Duane Davis, Asheville, NC  
MaryEllen Cronin & Charles Cronin Jr  
Steven Gastreich, Wauwatosa, WI

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Patricia Roberts, Helena MT  
Ernest Jones, Walla Walla, WA  
Kathleen L. Maroney, Loveland, CO  
Richard Schutz, Ph.D., Topeka, KS  
Marjorie MacBride, Mount Prospect, IL  
Judy L. Davis, Asheville, NC  
Carlos Servan, NFB Supporter, NE  
DeAnna Noriega, Manitou Springs, CO  
Kathleen Gasper, Watertown, MA  
Alfred Gasper, Watertown, MA  
Petition from Dubuque Copyworks, 20 illegible signatures, IA  
Mary Smiech, Salvation Army Missionary, Nigeria  
Terri Hedgpeth, Arizona State Univ, Disability Support Services  
David Jarvis, Randolph-Sheppard Vendors of Louisiana, Terrytown, LA  
Bob Hachey, Waltham, MA  
Tom Turner, Bedford, PA  
Jim Jirak, Omaha, Nebraska  
Ivars Pakulis, Bedford, OH  
Mike Chrisman, Scottsdale, AZ  
Richard Chrisman, Scottsdale, AZ  
Peggy Chrisman, Scottsdale, AZ  
Jo Ann Taylor, Springfield, OH  
David Nanney, Randallstown, MD  
Paula Partlow, Walla Walla, WA  
Vickie Prahin, Hadley School for the Blind  
Greg & Leo Olney, Mayfield, KY  
Abigail Johnson, Sheridan, WY  
Cynthia Lynn, RN, Petersburg, Alaska  
Carol Schmitt, Minot, ND  
Hannah Mcginnis, Parent, Rockville, MD  
Richard Bird, Parma Heights, OH  
Mrs. Gina Bird, Parma Heights, OH  
Doly Sowder, Bedford, IN  
Mike Sowder, Bedford, IN  
Rita S. Eggert, Rochester, NY  
Ken Arzarian, Friday Harbor, WA  
Harold Newsom, Phoenix, AZ  
Daniel Graham, Haverhill, MA  
Anne Donald, Mountain View, CA  
Td Kneebone, Aberdeen, SD  
Barbara Z. Gardner, Springdale, OH  
Rosanne Hughey  
Lynn Krumm  
Glenn Plunkett  
Ada & E.W. Stokes  
Risa Racecar  
David Mayer  
Joseph Perry  
Fred Carter  
Tracy Smith, FL  
Matthew Chao  
Patti Zimmerman  
Audrey Monahan  
Mary351742aol.com  
Irene Carter  
James Rogers

Joseph Kuster  
Robert Walker, Jr  
Maria Mercado & Ernesto Raices  
John Clapp for Sylvia Roose  
Jeff Moyer  
Teresa Chastain  
Maggie Starkovich, parent, ID  
Lyn Walsh, Cary NC  
Aleck Rafolovich, Ventura, CA  
Wayne Hinckley, Woods Cross, UT  
Marilyn Nelson, North Dakota  
Deborah Ver Steeg, Sioux Falls, SD  
Todd Turansky, Augusta, GA  
Benita Shor, Madison, NJ  
Thomas Stuart, Peoria, IL  
Bernie Stuart, Peoria, IL  
Pat Reed, Peoria, Illinois  
Drew Galas, Peoria, Illinois  
Peggy Davies, Peoria, Illinois  
William Nelson, Sr, Peoria, IL  
Nicole Wood, Peoria, IL  
Debbie Hatton, East Peoria, IL  
Wiliam Hatton, East Peoria, IL  
Jason Scobe, Peoria, IL  
Wayne Davis, Peoria IL  
Anthony Davis, Peoria, IL  
Johnie Mae Thomas, Peoria, IL  
Maxine Foster, Bartonville, IL  
Deborah Mathews, Peoria, IL  
Thomas D. Vogel, Peoria, IL  
Sandra Malott, Peoria, IL  
Pamela Vogel, Peoria, IL  
Esther Knott, Peoria IL  
Carol Warren, Peoria, IL  
Francis Shelly, Peoria, IL  
Milton Bolden, Peoria, IL  
Katie & J. Hall, Peoria, IL  
Tony Engle, Peoria, IL  
Margaret Reding  
Steven Spenger  
Kirk R. Ford  
Michael Campbell  
Larry Peschner  
Bary Vaughn  
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Mazza  
John Hampton, Sr.  
Donna Fanelle,  
Edith Lauderback  
Melissa Rothermel  
Richard Rueda  
Janice L. Squires  
Art Stevenson  
Deborah Angel  
Francia Malone  
Jeffrey Ulrich  
Larry McNeese

Sharon Booker  
Fernando Botelho  
Suzie Yost  
Gaylen Kapperman, Ed.D.,  
Frank and Joan Medina  
Joann Block  
Dianne Healey  
Audrey Schading  
Willie T. Berry  
Leo Healey  
Marie Griffin  
Sandra Harmon  
Robert Lockwood  
Gail LuSane



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  
??

CC: ""info@acb.org"" <info@acb.org>

## DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

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

November 3, 2000

Dear Ms. Salas,

This is regarding Docket # 99-339.

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

I wish to express my appreciation to the Commissioners of the FCC for their courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing video description service for people who are blind or visually impaired.

It is very important for anyone who cannot see the screen to have an alternate means for knowing what's happening on the television. Words cannot express how much video description means to me. It has allowed me to enjoy movies and plays with family and friends and given me a real feeling of independence. I have been looking forward to turning on my television in April, 2002, to enjoy shows with family and friends and to use the video description to help understand the visual aspects of the programming.

I want to be able to enjoy the same programming as others.

Sincerely,

Magalie Salas  
SECRETARY



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Dolly Sowder  
205 Hawthorne Dr  
Bedford, IN 47421

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

November 3, 2000

Dear Ms. Salas,

This is regarding Docket # 99-339.

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

I wish to express my appreciation to the Commissioners of the FCC for their courageous vote requiring the networks to begin providing video description service for people who are blind or visually impaired.

I am writing this letter in consideration of and for people who are blind or visually impaired. It is very important for anyone who cannot see the screen to have an alternate means for knowing what's happening on the television. It allows people who are blind or visually impaired to enjoy television with family and friends and give them a real feeling of independence.

The FCC needs to do the right thing by requiring video description to be on television.

Sincerely,

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Mike Sowder  
205 Hawthorne Dr  
Bedford, IN 47421

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To: Magalie Salas, Secretary  
 The Federal Communication Commission  
 445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
 Washington, DC 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

From: Cynthia E. Lynn, BSN, RN  
 Post Office Box 1758  
 Petersburg, Alaska 99833

RE: In opposition to Petitioners for Reconsideration of the Reported Order on Video Description.

Docket #99-339

November 1, 2000

Dear Commissioners,

Please uphold your July 21<sup>st</sup> ruling requiring television networks to provide video description by April 2002.

I am using my Marks Scripts guide so I can get this urgent request in the mail. This Script Guide allows me to write in cursive and in straight lines even though I cannot see the letters. I hope it is legible.

Even as a teenager I could not read subtitles unless I was right on top of the TV set. When I read the subtitles I could not read the remainder of the screen. Of course I thought that everyone saw as I did.

In 1996 when I was diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa, the loss of peripheral sight explained this tunnel vision.

In spite of this I finished college and worked as an RN for twenty years. September 1994 was the first time I had to admit that I could no longer see the TV to follow the story.

I now have to get all my cues from listening only. Trying to identify the characters by memorizing the voices of each person. Environmental happenings are also a guess by using my ears. I have to identify sounds, i.e.: is that what a person falling down sounds like?

Trying to see the story without sight is not fun. With long pauses without dialogue, not being able to see the people, landscape, facial expressions, or sequence of action scenes makes it almost impossible to follow the plot. My three children are so tired of my asking, "Who was that? What's happening?"

My first time to experience DVS was as a student at the Carroll Center for the Blind, in Newton Massachusetts. While in the dormitory we were supplied with DVS videos. For the first time I was able to enjoy a film. The DVS speaker explained, between speaking parts, a description of what the characters looked like, the action, i.e.: "he crosses the room" or "with a look of rage on his face".

I also experienced DVS at a musical production of "Titanic" in Boston. The DVS speaker gave a brief introduction

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Cynthia E. Lynn  
 Petersburg, Alaska

to the story, how the stage was set up and who sang this or that and why. Even seated just behind the orchestra, I could see nothing. It was fun to enjoy the play thanks to DVS.

Television and movies are such a major part of our lives these days. To not be have the ability to enjoy it is a loss. With DVS I can enjoy both. Being blind I need this accommodation. Blindness is not just an inconvenience believe me. Sight loss affects every single part of a persons daily living, quality of life and recreation.

Presently I cannot drive anymore, cannot sail my sailboat, read a book, take photographs, hike, bicycle or fish. With my continued rehabilitation I shall find other interests to replace some activities and ways to accommodate such as learning Braille, to read in peace and quite and hiring a sighted skipper for sailing. With my audible computer I hope to return to the workplace soon.

In the meantime I can enjoy the latest videos thanks to Descriptive Video Services. Where I live in Alaska we currently do not have DVS receiver or Radio Reading Service.

Thank you,

Cynthia E. Lynn RN.

Petersburg, Alaska

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

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Ms. Salas:

My husband, Leo, is legally blind. Both he and I would like to see the FCC Commissioners for your courageous vote requiring the network description, an essential information service to people who are blind understand the July 21st ruling of the FCC is now under attack by pet writing to let you know how important it is for us that your July 21 ruling stands.

Unless you are blind yourself, it can be difficult to imagine how blind, so picture this: While everyone else is laughing at the antics man/woman/child sits silent, wondering at the laughter until someone is funny. How much better if the program itself describes what is going ALONE, with no one else to describe it for him/her? Now, can you begin to see the video description of TV programming is?

We have enjoyed several videos that came - described - for the small public library, but they were few, and here in Mayfield, KY, we don't have any petitioners have not provided any

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new information that was not already known at the time the FCC reached its decision and issued the ruling, the reconsideration if we are looking forward to turning on our TV sets in April, 2002, to enjoy using the video description to help him understand the visual aspects and deny him t

  
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enjoy with his loved ones. This letter is IN OPPOSITION TO PETITION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION, Docket #99-339. Thanking you

Sincerely,

Gloria (& Leo) Olney  
ec: access@fcc.gov  
info@acb.org

er 2, 2000

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

Dear Ms. Salas:

My husband, Leo, is legally blind. Both he and I would like to et the FCC Commissioners for your c! ☺ " ● \$ ● & ● X ● ä ● \* ● π ● t ● ( ● ÷ ● E ● A ● L ● " ● \$ ^ n

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## DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

**From:** Steven Gastreich <briansg@execpc.com>  
**To:** <access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Mon, Nov 6, 2000 6:12 PM  
**Subject:** Video Description.

11-06-00

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

Docket No. 99-339

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this correspondence is to submit comments "in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description".

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Federal Communications Commission for this crucial and courageous vote in support of video description regarding network programming.

Since childhood, I have enjoyed many hours in front of the television. However, to enjoy these programs completely, I have to rely on family and friends to provide the visual details. Often, there are times when I watch television alone or with other blind friends. Unfortunately, in this case, the visual aspects are left to the imagination. Nothing is more frustrating than watching a favorite program or lengthy movie only to discover that questions regarding the outcome of the plot can only be answered by sight. In this case, all we can do as a blind community is long for the "Golden Days of Radio" when blind and sighted alike were on an equal playing field in obtaining all the information on a particular program.

So, I could not have been happier when I learned that both Hollywood movies and Public Television had begun using Descriptive Video Service "DVS". Because of this, I have appreciated true independence in experiencing programs that I choose to view. In learning about these advances, along with "Closed captioning" for deaf and hard of hearing viewers, I had hoped that Network Television's accommodation of Descriptive Video would not be far behind.

Now, I am eagerly waiting for April of 2002 when I can finally enjoy Network television the way I had always dreamed. I want to stress here that I feel that video description's importance should go further than simply the program being aired, but also when there is important information on the screen. How many times have I heard an announcer refer to "the number on your screen". Or, even more importantly, when there are important messages such weather warnings which are only accessible to sighted viewers. It is my hope that once again, like in the early days of radio, that in regarding television, we as a blind community will have equal access with our sighted counterparts.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Steven Gastreich   
 11/6/00

Thank you again for this very important vote.

Sincerely,

Steven Gastreich

10727 W. Grantosa Dr.

Wauwatosa, WI 53222

(414) 464-1756

briansg@execpc.com

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**From:** "Fanelle, Donna (MCB)" Donna Fanelle <Donna.Fanelle@state.ma.us>  
**To:** <access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Mon, Nov 6, 2000 5:31 PM  
**Subject:** Descriptive Video Services comments

65 Bradshaw Street  
 Medford, MA 02155-4846  
 November 6, 2000

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

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Dear Magalie:

I am writing to submit comments "IN OPPOSITION TO PETITIONERS FOR RECONSIDERATION OF THE REPORTED ORDER ON VIDEO DESCRIPTION".  
 The Docket No. is 99-339.

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Commissioners of the FCC for their courageous July vote requiring the networks to begin providing this essential information service to people who are blind and visually impaired. I am a totally blind person who has had the privilege of watching several movies with video description. I cannot tell you how much it has enhanced my viewing of visual aspects of the films. Prior to video description, I would have to rely on friends or family to describe action in parts where there was no dialogue. Many a time I was left to only wonder or guess.

With video description, I am able to receive the information seen by my sighted peers.

With descriptive video service (DVS), I have a greater appreciation and understanding of the movie or television program content. I am pleased that public broadcasting has made several of its programs available through DVS.

I am really looking forward to having this same service available through the means of commercial and cable television. We as blind persons are entitled to the same information that the general public sees.

This includes weather alerts or emergency advisories.

I also hope that advertisers of products will include audio telephone number announcements of what is displayed on the screen.

I look forward to the day when I will be able to watch comedies, dramas and movies with video description. Since broadcasters have provided "closed captioning" for the deaf, I thank the FCC for recognizing that those of us with a visual disability deserve similar access.

To date, the petitioners have not provided any new information which was not already known when the FCC reached its July, 2000 ruling.

Thank you once again for your support of video description services.

*Donna Fanelle*  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Sincerely,

Donna Fanelle

**CC:** <info@acb.org>

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**From:** "tony swartz" <tonyswartz@fast.net>  
**To:** <info@acb.org>, <access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Mon, Nov 6, 2000 9:38 PM  
**Subject:** Comments in opposition to petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description

99-339

1944 Girard Ave.  
 Allentown Pa. 18104-1114

November 4, 2000

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

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
 OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission,

First, allow me to express my gratitude and appreciation for your momentous ruling of July 21, 2000 mandating the television networks to begin providing Descriptive Video, docket no. 99339. This decision clearly establishes a course of action which will grant those of us who are blind much greater access to this medium. I am, therefore, submitting comments in opposition to the petitioners for reconsideration of the reported order on video description.

To a person who is blind or visually impaired, watching television is not as one older sighted friend supposed "just like we used to listen to the old radio shows". I have become increasingly aware that this medium relies heavily on what can be communicated visually. Settings, costumes, the nonverbal reactions of characters all contribute substantially to the greater power of what this medium can convey.

What have I done in the absence of Video Description? At times, I have attempted to draw some inferences based on dialogue or, in the absence of dialogue, I might ask a friend or family member, if available, to attempt to describe the action. But, more often than not I have avoided television and while some might suppose this to be a positive conclusion, the truth is that television is an integral part of our culture with great potential for informing, as well as, entertaining.

From my perspective as an individual who is blind, I can only tell you that the service is truly worthwhile and appreciated. I would ask you to remember that the single disadvantage of blindness, at its core, is simply to live in the absence of

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information provided by the sense of sight. For those of us who are blind television viewers, Descriptive Video effectively fills in the information gaps allowing us the opportunity to share in the experience of this highly visual medium. It is, therefore, unconscionable that individuals blind or visually impaired should be excluded from the fullest possible access to television.

It is understandable why the television, cable, and movie industries would submit a petition for reconsideration of the Video Description ruling, but it is personally appalling and revolting that a national organization of the blind would join them. It is most obvious that the National Federation of the Blind is not in touch with the majority of the blind population on this issue. Furthermore, the petitioners for reconsideration have provided no new information not already available to Commissioners at the time of the ruling. I ask you to, therefore, deny their petition for reconsideration.

Your review and consideration of my comments are most deeply appreciated.

Regards,  
Tony Swartz

Tony B. Swartz

1944 Girard Ave  
Allentown PA 18104-1114

Home phone# (610) 799-4565  
Work phone# (610) 782-3627

Home Email: [tonyswartz@fast.net](mailto:tonyswartz@fast.net)  
Work email: [tonyswartz@lehighcounty.org](mailto:tonyswartz@lehighcounty.org)

**From:** "Duane Davis" <ddavis@unca.edu>  
**To:** <access@fcc.gov>  
**Date:** Mon, Nov 6, 2000 8:31 PM  
**Subject:** do not reconsider the July ruling

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

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

Duane H. Davis  
Philosophy Department  
UNC Asheville, CPO# 1610  
One University Heights  
Asheville, NC 28804-8505

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PLEASE CONTACT THE COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION  
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

*Duane H. Davis*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DUANE H. DAVIS

phone (828) 251-6367  
fax (828) 251-6820

**CC:** <info@acb.org>