

Docket # 98-07

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Division of Consumer Affairs
Florida Public Service Commission
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0866

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Dear Sir or Madam:

PROVIDING SPEECH TO SPEECH

I live in Florida and I urge the Florida Public Service Commission to make telephones accessible to more people with speech disabilities by establishing Speech to Speech and an effective STS outreach service. I urge the Florida PSC to comply with FCC Regulations and provide STS in Florida by March 2001.

*FROM
A. Bennett
Sun City, FL*

In California, people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because of STS. One example is Dr. Robert Aber who experienced great growth in his psychology practice once he was able to communicate with clients over STS. Writer Pam Hoyer advanced her writing career substantially using STS to gather facts for articles. Dr Bob Segalman became successful as a social activist helping people with speech disabilities once he began using STS. STS potentially answers the telecommunications needs of thousands of people.

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PROVIDING STS OUTREACH

In addition to providing STS itself, providing outreach appropriate to people with speech disabilities is an essential part of access. When people with speech disabilities have appropriate training to use STS, they become more independent, participate more in the community, get jobs etc. The new relay regulations require states and relay providers to contract such that relay is accessible to users with speech disabilities.

If the Florida PSC provides STS without appropriate outreach, call volumes will be extremely low. Call volumes could rise substantially with an extensive STS outreach service tailored to people with speech disabilities. Failure to provide appropriate outreach for STS means Florida residents with speech disabilities will not enter the mainstream of life.

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List A B C D E

Because I want this independence for people with speech disabilities in Florida, I strongly urge you to provide an STS outreach service similar

to
the very successful STS intensive outreach services in California,
Minnesota and Maryland.

FUNDING STS OUTREACH

Based on Minnesota's budgetary experience, such a service may cost
\$360,000
annually based on Florida's population.. Many states have sufficient
surcharge money to fund a STS outreach service without difficulty.
Vocational rehabilitation client services money may be available to teach
people to use STS as it fosters independence and makes people job ready.

CONCLUSION

A large proportion of people with speech disabilities have other
disabilities as well; this makes it very difficult for them to advocate
for
themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for the rest of us to insure that
services like STS outreach are adequately provided for.

Again, I strongly urge you to provide STS and budget for an effective STS
outreach service with an annual budget of about \$360,000.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

SIGNATURE:

Ordolph J Bennett

ADDRESS:

*433 Ojai Ave
Sun City Center Fla 33573*

CITY, STATE, ZIP:

DATE:

1/09/01

cc: Disability Rights Office
Consumer Information Bureau
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

cc: Michael B. Fingerhut, General Attorney
Sprint Corporation
401 9th Street, NW, Suite 400
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cc: Bob Segalman, Ph.D.
Department of Rehabilitation
Att: Program Evaluation
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