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March 25, 2002

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Dear Mr. Caton

I am writing this letter to express my views on the proposed mandatory requirement that descriptive video be used on television. As a totally blind person who has had opportunity to experience DVS on a number of occasions, I found that I don't like it. I don't find descriptive video adding to my enjoyment or information about a program in an appreciable manner. The most damaging aspect of mandatory DVS for me would be the negative message it would send to our sighted friends. Blind people already have a hard time getting in to the work place and in to other aspects of society because the seeing public believe we need more accommodation than is actually necessary. We've been enjoying TV for a long time without mandatory narration and it would be unfair and costly to require the entertainment industry to provide a service many of us don't want. Instead of giving us something that wouldn't benefit us all that much I'd rather your agency look in to providing a service we really need. When the crawl goes across the bottom of the screen to tell of severe weather, election returns, or some other emergency, we don't know what's happening. To have this information made available to us in spoken form would be much more relevant and possibly even life saving than what your current proposed plan is about. Besides, who would determine which programs would have description and what hours during the week this would be available, or what about old reruns in syndication on independent and cable channels. In summary, I think we could use valuable information not currently under consideration but not the comedy and drama programs currently under discussion. Also, if you would like more input from the blind community on this issue, I would encourage you to contact James Gashel, National Federation of the Blind, Baltimore, MD. 410-659-9314. They would be most helpful in articulating the views of many of us who are blind.

Thank you for considering my letter.

Sincerely,

Dan Keller

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