

October 18, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW, TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Re: CG Docket #02-311 - Biennial Review 2002

The Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons is a nonprofit organization with a mission of empowering deaf and hard of hearing individuals and their families through education, advocacy and community involvement. Our organization provides services to approximately 180,000 deaf and hard of hearing individuals in the Northern Virginia Metro area.

We strongly oppose tinkering with, or removal of, any of the regulations related to the following:

Hearing aid compatibility with telephones
Digital wireless phone compatibility with TTYs
Access to interactive voice response (IVR) systems
Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS)
Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act

It is important that the many regulations affecting access to telecommunications for people who are deaf and hard of hearing be maintained and strongly enforced. A long history has shown that market forces alone will not provide the incentive for this access to occur on its own. While many telecommunications equipment manufacturers and service providers have made commendable strides in achieving access, it is clear that we have not yet reached the much desired point where access features are something that is automatic from the design stage through the life of a product or service.

Respectfully submitted,
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