



United Cerebral Palsy of Central Ohio

440 Industrial Mile lid. Columbus, Ohio 43228-2411 (614) 279-0109 (614) 279-2527 FAX ucpcofcentralohio.org

Adult Day Program Employment Program In Home Program Assistive Technology

Adult Day Canters:

Grace Kindig ADC 440 Industrial Mile Road Columbus, Ohio 43228 (614) 279-0109

Reese ADC 123 South 3rd Street Newark, Ohio 43055 (740) 345-4771



UCP of Central Ohio is a CARF accredited United Way Agency.

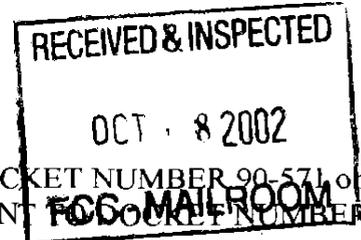
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EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

Office of the Secretary of the FCC Federal Communications Commission 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554

September 25, 2002

Subject "EX PARTE COMMENT FOR DOCKET NUMBER 90-571 on NECA FUNDS" and "EX PARTE COMMENT FOR DOCKET NUMBER 98-67 ON TRS/STS OUTREACH"



Dear Secretary

I live in Ohio and I am pleased that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) of Ohio made telephones accessible to people with speech disabilities by providing Speech to Speech I STRONGLY URGE THE PUC TO ESTABLISH AN EFFECTIVE STS OUTREACH SERVICE

In Ohio, people with speech disabilities have dramatically improved their lives because of the increasing availability of assistive technology. The availability of STS would have a positive impact on the lives of people with disabilities served by United Cerebral Palsy of Central Ohio. A majority of the people with disabilities experience the frustration of their speech and communication not being understood by the general public. People with disabilities face challenges in communicating in their everyday lives. STS services would eliminate one barrier people with disabilities must overcome.

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 Public Utilities Commission of Ohio 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. Providing appropriate outreach for STS will help Ohio residents with speech disabilities enter the mainstream of life.

Because I want this independence for people with speech disabilities in Ohio, I strongly urge the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to provide an STS outreach service similar to the very successful STS intensive outreach services in California, Minnesota and Maryland.

LIST ABOVE

You see people. we see promise.



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of Central Ohio**

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Based on Minnesota's budgetary experience, such a service may cost \$288,000 annually based on Ohio'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.

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 the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio to budget for an effective **STS** outreach service with an annual budget of \$288,000.

Sincerely,

Kathy Streblo
Kathy Streblo
Executive Director



cc: **Disability** Rights Office
Consumer Information **Bureau**
Federal Communications Commission, Room 6C-447
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Washington, DC 20554

cc: Beth Blackmer
Public Interest Center
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
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cc: Michael B. Fingerhut, General Attorney
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cc: Kristine Shipley, Program Manager
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cc: Bob Segalman, Ph.D.
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Aft: Program Evaluation
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