

Relay services are very important to me. Relay services connect people who use telephones with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or who have a speech disability, who use other types of telecommunications devices (for example, TTYs, computers, videophones, captioned telephones, and mobile wireless devices). With relay services, I can make and receive calls when I am home, at work, and on the road. I use relay services when I call to make appointments, buy things, chat with family and friends, and take care of business every day.

I support the comments filed by the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI), Association of Late-Deafened Adults, Inc. (ALDA), Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (DHHCAN), California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (CCASDHH) and Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA).

The FCC needs to expand the role of Telecommunications Relay Service Fund Advisory Council in the rate setting process. Representatives of the deaf and hard of hearing community are part of the Advisory Council. The Advisory Council needs access to information about relay service costs and rates to study the issue and make a recommendation, before the FCC takes action.

When the FCC sets new rates for relay services, those rates should pay relay service providers fairly and cover all reasonable expenses, including outreach, marketing, research, and development. Rates set too low do not serve the deaf and hard of hearing community or the hearing public. Rates set too low will reduce the visibility, reliability, and availability of existing and future relay services.

Please support relay services. Set rates that will make relay services functionally equivalent to voice telephone service.

Sincerely,

Rick