

July 3, 2007

**VIA ECFS**

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

In re: *Closed Captioning and Video Description of Video Programming – Implementation of Section 305 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 – Video Programming Accessibility*

**CGB-CC-0686 – Opposition to the Petition for Exemption from Closed Captioning Requirements Filed by Champions Church**

Dear Ms. Dortch:

Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (“TDI”), National Association for the Deaf (“NAD”), Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network (“DHHCAN”), Hearing Loss Association of America (“HLAA”), Association of Late-Deafened Adults, Inc. (“ALDA”), American Association of People with Disabilities (“AAPD”), and California Coalition of Agencies Serving the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (“CCASDHH”) (collectively, “Commenters”) submit for filing in the above-captioned proceeding their opposition to the petition for exemption from the Commission’s closed captioning requirements filed by Champions Church for its program “crosswalk” (the “Petition”).

The following is a summary of pertinent program, financial, and other information provided in the Petition:

Champions Church broadcasts a weekly, half hour, unscripted interview format program on FOX43. Champions Church estimates that closed captioning would cost \$300 - \$450 per week and that air time costs \$350 per week. The broadcast, which is produced by volunteers, “uses many text and graphic displays for the viewers during the program” and “the last 5-8 minutes of the program are strictly text format.” Champions Church provided a 2006 statement showing revenue of \$28,865.61 and expenses of \$23,768.00. Although the filing includes an affidavit, Champion Church failed to provide copies of its correspondence with closed captioning companies or any indication that organization sought to recoup the cost of closed captioning.

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Commenters believe that the Petitioner has provided information that suggests that compliance with the closed captioning requirements would impose an undue burden under the Commission's existing waiver standards.<sup>1</sup> Commenters recommend that the Petitioner be given a temporary exemption of two (2) years to comply with the closed captioning rules.

## **I. The Legal Standard for Granting a Petition for Exemption**

Section 713 of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (the "Act"), requires that video programming be closed captioned, regardless of distribution technologies, to ensure that it is accessible to persons with hearing disabilities.<sup>2</sup> The Commission has the authority to grant a petition for an exemption from the closed captioning requirements upon a showing that the requirements would impose an undue burden on the video programming provider or video owner.<sup>3</sup> Congress defined "undue burden" to mean "significant difficulty or expense."<sup>4</sup>

A petition seeking a waiver of the captioning rules must demonstrate that compliance would result in an undue burden within the meaning of Section 713(e) and Section 79.1(f) of the Commission's rules.<sup>5</sup> Section 713 requires the Commission to consider four factors when determining whether the closed captioning requirements will impose an undue burden: (1) the nature and cost of the closed captions for the programming; (2) the impact on the operation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Although Commenters believe that the Petitioner may meet the undue burden standard set forth in 47 U.S.C. § 613(e) and 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f), the Commission may not properly rely on the *Anglers Exemption Order* to determine whether Petitioner's request meets the undue burden standard. *In the Matter of Anglers for Christ Ministries, Inc.; New Beginning Ministries; Video Programming Accessibility; Petitions for Exemption from Closed Captioning Requirements*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, DA 06-1802 (2006) ("*Anglers Exemption Order*"). The *Anglers Exemption Order* is not a final order and the new standard fails to incorporate an "economically burdensome" or an "undue burden" standard as mandated by 47 U.S.C. § 613(e). *See Application for Review of Bureau Order*, Docket No. 06-181, CGB-CC-0005, CGB-CC-0007 (filed October 12, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 613(e).

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> 47 U.S.C. § 613(e); 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f).

provider or program owner; (3) the financial resources of the provider or program owner; and (4) the type of operations of the provider or program owner.<sup>6</sup>

Section 79.1(f) of the Commission's rules sets forth the Commission's procedures for seeking an exemption from the closed captioning requirements on the basis that compliance would impose an undue burden on the programmer.<sup>7</sup> A petition for an exemption from the closed captioning requirements must be supported by sufficient evidence to demonstrate that compliance with the requirements would cause an undue burden.<sup>8</sup> Such petition must contain a detailed, full showing, supported by affidavit, of any facts or considerations relied on by the petitioner.<sup>9</sup> It must also describe any available alternatives that might constitute a reasonable substitute for the captioning requirements.<sup>10</sup>

In the 2006 *Anglers Exemption Order*, the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau ("CGB") improperly created a new standard that ignored the "undue burden" analysis required by the Act, the Commission's rules, and Commission precedent. Instead, the CGB stated that any non-profit organization may be granted a waiver from the closed captioning rules if the organization does not receive compensation for airing its programming and if it may terminate or substantially curtail its programming or other activities important to its mission if it is required to caption its programming.<sup>11</sup> The Commission may not properly rely on the *Anglers Exemption Order* to determine whether Petitioner's request meets the undue burden standard. Commenters have sought review of the *Anglers Exemption Order* by the Commission and, accordingly, the *Anglers Exemption Order* is not final.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, the standard announced by the CGB in the *Anglers Exemption Order* was inappropriate because it failed to incorporate an

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f).

<sup>8</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f)(2).

<sup>9</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f)(9).

<sup>10</sup> 47 C.F.R. § 79.1(f)(3).

<sup>11</sup> *In the Matter of Anglers for Christ Ministries, Inc.; New Beginning Ministries; Video Programming Accessibility; Petitions for Exemption from Closed Captioning Requirements*, Memorandum Opinion and Order, DA 06-1802 (2006) ("*Anglers Exemption Order*").

<sup>12</sup> *See Application for Review of Bureau Order*, Docket No. 06-181, CGB-CC-0005, CGB-CC-0007 (filed October 12, 2006).

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“economically burdensome” or an “undue burden” standard as mandated by the Act and fails to require Petitioner to demonstrate the four factors listed above.

## **II. Conclusion**

Commenters believe that the Petitioner has provided information that suggests that compliance with the closed captioning requirements would in fact impose an undue burden under the Commission’s existing waiver standards. As such, Commenters recommend that the Petitioner be given a temporary exemption of two (2) years to comply with the closed captioning rules.

In addition, Commenters respectfully request that the Commission accept the attached certification that the facts and considerations in this filing are true and correct and waive the requirement to provide an affidavit for a responsive pleading.<sup>13</sup>

Respectfully submitted,

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/ s /  
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<sup>13</sup> 47 C.F.R. §79.1(f)(9).

/ s /

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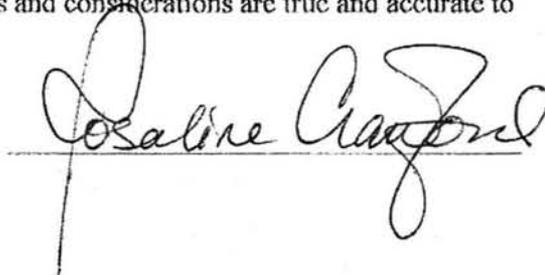
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## CERTIFICATION

I, Rosaline Crawford, Director, NAD Law and Advocacy Center, hereby certify that to the extent there are any facts or considerations not already in the public domain which have been relied on in the attached Opposition to the Petition for Exemption from Closed Captioning Requirements, these facts and considerations are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rosaline Crawford", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and includes a long vertical stroke extending downwards from the end of the name.

Date: July 3, 2007

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Danielle Burt, do hereby certify that, on July 3, 2007, a copy of the foregoing Opposition to the Petition for Exemption from Closed Captioning Requirements Filed by Champions Church, as filed with the Federal Communications Commission in CGB-CC-0686, was served by first class U.S. mail, postage prepaid, upon the Petitioner:

Champions Church  
c/o Mark Bassen  
1805 Oakwood Drive  
Pekin, IL 61554

/s/

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Danielle Burt