

My name is Larry Biondi, and I am writing because I support providing training to potential Speech-to-Speech users. I want to ask that this state's application for telecommunications relay service (TRS) recertification include a comprehensive plan to train a majority of prospective users to use STS.

I am a person with a speech disability and I work full time as an Advocacy Coordinator for Progress Center for Independent Living.

I've been using speech-to-speech relay services for the last seven years as an integral part of my job function. I use this relay service to contact inaccessible businesses and talk to them about ways to make them accessible. I also make other job-related phone calls using Speech-to-Speech Relay Service, as well as personal phone calls.

This service has added independence into my life.

Speech-to-Speech has been a relay service that has worked. It has aided an ever increasing number of speech disabled consumers to attain functional equivalency. It has been the best answer to fulfilling the promise of Section 225 of the Communications Act for this population. This act requires that the FCC ensure that both "interstate and intrastate telecommunications relay services are available, to the extent possible, to . . . speech-impaired individuals." Presently, the state appears to be violating the spirit of section 225.

A large proportion of people with speech disabilities cannot advocate for themselves and so, I am doing that. Every speech disabled person has the right to know how to use STS. Please ensure that this state's recertification plan includes adequate funding for a comprehensive statewide training for all potential users.