

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

*Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.*

*Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; Speech-to-Speech and Internet Protocol (IP) Speech-to-Speech Telecommunications Relay Services, CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 08-15, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.*

Today we take additional steps to help improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. We adopt a ten-digit numbering system for Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). We also seek comment on ways to improve Speech-to-Speech service (STS) and whether IP STS should be compensated from the Interstate TRS Fund. Through these actions, we make progress in fulfilling our statutory goal of ensuring that every person has equal access to this nation's communications services.

We are well aware that there are many Americans with hearing or speech disabilities that depend on TRS services for their daily communication needs. The Commission remains committed to improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by ensuring that they have the same access to communication technologies as people without such disabilities.

In March, the Commission committed to adopt an order providing a ten-digit numbering system for Internet-based TRS by the end of June and to require that the ten-digit numbering system be implemented no later than December 31, 2008. I am pleased that we fulfill these commitments today. Ten-digit numbering will enable Internet-based TRS users to make and receive calls like anyone else, eradicating another barrier that stands in the way of functional equivalency. Functional equivalency means individuals with disabilities having access to the same services as everyone else. This equal access is vital to accessing jobs, education, public safety, and simple communications with family, friends, and neighbors.

I also support our inquiry into ways to improve STS and our tentative conclusion that IP STS is a form of TRS eligible for compensation from the Interstate TRS Fund. IP STS has the potential to allow a broader range of individuals to communicate. By not being constrained to a specific piece of equipment that resides in a particular location, users of this service would have tremendous flexibility in how and where they use this service. Moreover, individuals with disabilities would have access to new technologies and, specifically, be able to realize the benefits of broadband services.

I want to assure those of you with hearing or speech disabilities that we will not stop actively working to fulfill your need for functional equivalence. We could not have taken today's actions without your valuable input. We thank you for your participation in our proceedings and look forward to working with you and the service providers to implement the ten-digit numbering system and to improve speech to speech service. It is by working together that we can best ensure that the tremendous advances in communications are enjoyed by *all* Americans.

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

*Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.*

Today the Commission takes another essential step towards making sure that come December 31, 2008 the deaf and hard of hearing community will be able to obtain 10-digit phone numbers – something that most of us with a cell phone or home phone too often take for granted. In doing so, users of Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Services such as Video Relay Service and IP-Relay will be able to give their friends, family, doctors, and employers a phone number to reach them just like voice telephone users. The Order requires that these phone numbers be portable and the consumer devices be interoperable. The Order also requires that emergency calls placed by these users be automatically and correctly connected with local emergency services. I am pleased to support this Order and the Commission's decision to require that all of this be completed no later than December 31, 2008. Deaf and hard of hearing consumers have waited too long for this service already and it is certainly consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act's mandate of "functional equivalency."

Getting to this juncture has not been an easy road and there is still much work to do. For this reason, I also support the Commission's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on certain implementation issues involving emergency calling, Customer Proprietary Network Information, and anti-slamming rules. Comment is also sought on other important issues such as the appropriate timeline for existing users to sign-up for a number, the assignment of multiple phone numbers to a user or a single phone number to multiple services, how costs for this new system should be covered, and ways to prevent fraud. These and other issues teed up in the Further Notice are all critical questions, many of them novel, and I would urge all stakeholders to provide the Commission with the benefit of their insights, knowledge and experience.

The Order also emphasizes the critical need for consumer outreach. The availability of phone numbers is a very big step in the advancement of functionally equivalent telephone service for the deaf and hard hearing community. With that will come many questions, probably some concerns, and inevitably I fear some confusion as we move to the system adopted today. For these reasons, it's incumbent upon the FCC, providers, and consumer advocacy organizations to engage in a coordinated campaign to inform the disability community.

As with most systemic and promising changes, it is essential that all stakeholders, particularly the disability community, provide the Commission with its ongoing input and ideas. The FCC must do a good job of monitoring the process and be ready to respond to any unintended consequences. In addition, the Commission must remain diligent in its efforts to oversee the integrity of these programs. The move to a numbering system should afford the Commission, providers, and businesses additional tools in their efforts to combat fraud, particularly when it comes to IP-Relay.

I want to thank Chairman Martin and all my colleagues for their support for this Order and their efforts in making it come to fruition. I also appreciate the hard work and guidance provided by the deaf and hard of hearing community on these important issues. Finally, I want to pay tribute to Cathy Seidel and Nicole McGinnis of the Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau, Tom Chandler of the Disabilities Rights Office, Dana Shaffer and Nick Alexander of the Wireline Competition Bureau, and their teams who in less than three months organized a stakeholder workshop, analyzed a refreshed record, and labored long hours on this technical, complicated and important Order. While we're not home yet, their ongoing efforts are worthy of recognition.

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

*Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.*

Earlier this year, the Commission made a commitment to establish a permanent and automated emergency access solution and a ten-digit dialing plan for Internet-based relay services. So, I am pleased that we honor that commitment today by adopting this Order, which sets us on a course to complete those tasks by December 31, 2008 and marks significant progress toward ensuring "functionally equivalent" service for consumers with hearing and speech disabilities.

With this Order, we adopt a permanent emergency access solution and a system of traditional ten-digit numbers for Internet-based relay services. A permanent emergency access solution will enable Internet-based relay service customers to automatically reach the appropriate emergency services, just as hearing users of interconnected VoIP services do. It is telling that users of Internet relay services described emergency access as "unequivocally the most important aspect of VRS and IP Relay functional equivalency."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the decision to adopt a true ten-digit dialing system will greatly improve the value of Internet-based relay services for consumers. We establish a comprehensive system, for the first time, that will allow VRS and IP Relay Service users to call and be called by other relay service customers and by hearing customers. It will also permit relay service users to port their numbers when they switch providers. I am also pleased that the accompanying Further Notice seeks comment on consumer protection issues, like slamming and customer privacy. Establishing appropriate consumer safeguards is another important element of ensuring "functional equivalence."

The progress we make today would not be possible were it not for the tireless efforts of the many consumer representatives who have championed these issues, participated in our stakeholder workshops, and provided critical input to my office and Commission staff. We have also benefited from the numerous providers who have shared their technical expertise and experience as we develop solutions to these long recognized problems, and we will need their continued cooperation as we implement the decisions reached here. I am also grateful for the attention and input of leading members of Congress who on a bipartisan basis have recognized the importance of these issues and asked us to move quickly.<sup>2</sup>

Finally, the talented staff from our Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Wireline Competition Bureau deserve particular praise for bringing their expertise and dedication to this task. They have done yeoman's work sorting through complicated numbering proposals, comparing advantages and disadvantages, and crafting the best elements of each into the current approach. We will need to rely on their continued efforts in order to meet the December 31<sup>st</sup> deadline for implementation, so I thank them for their contributions to this item and look forward to continuing the effort.

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<sup>1</sup> See Partial Opposition of Telecommunications For The Deaf And Hard Of Hearing, Inc.; Association Of Late-Deafened Adults, Inc.; National Association Of The Deaf; Deaf And Hard Of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network; And California Coalition Of Agencies Serving The Deaf And Hard Of Hearing (Dec. 20, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> See Letter from Chairman John D. Dingell, Ranking Member Joe Barton, Chairman Edward J. Markey, Ranking Member Fred Upton (Nov. 26, 2007).

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

*Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.*

On March 19, 2008, in our *VRS 911 Order*, we adopted interim emergency call handling requirements for Internet-based TRS providers. Pursuant to that Order on April 29, 2008, the Commission held a Stakeholder Workshop in which consumers and a cross-section of industry representatives discussed numbering issues, including three comprehensive numbering proposals reflected in the record. Today we fulfill our commitment in that Order and adopt a ten-digit telephone numbering system for users of Internet-based TRS, specifically Video Relay Service and IP Relay. Significantly, the ten-digit numbering system will further the functional equivalency mandate by permitting voice telephone users to call VRS and IP Relay users by dialing the relay user's ten-digit telephone number, the same way that voice telephone users call other voice telephone users. In addition, the item adopts registered location requirements similar to those applicable to interconnected VoIP providers to ensure that consumers can call emergency services via VRS and IP Relay and have their call automatically route to appropriate emergency services authorities.

As the Commission continues to consider the needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing community, we must ensure that all Americans benefit from advances in telecommunications services and equipment. Today we acknowledge that significant numbers of persons with hearing disabilities are seeking innovative services. I look forward to implementation of this plan by the end of 2008.