

**Before the
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554**

In the Matter of)	
)	
Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities)	CG Docket No. 03-123
)	
E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers)	WC Docket No. 05-196
)	

COMMENTS OF SORENSON COMMUNICATIONS, INC.

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Sorenson Communications, Inc. (“Sorenson”) submits these Comments in response to the Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“*FNPRM*”) released in the above-captioned proceeding, in which the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission” or “FCC”) sought comment on issues relating to the assignment and administration of ten-digit telephone numbers for Internet-based telecommunications relay services (“TRS”).¹

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Sorenson applauds the FCC’s recent Order adopting a system for assigning users of video relay service (“VRS”) and IP Relay (collectively “Internet-based TRS”) ten-digit telephone numbers linked to the North American Numbering Plan (“NANP”).² Sorenson has long been

¹ *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 & WC Docket No. 05-196, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 08-151 (rel. June 24, 2008) (“*Numbering Order*” or “*FNPRM*”).

² See *Numbering Order* ¶ 1.

involved in the effort to ensure that users of Internet-based TRS have access to the same telephone numbers as hearing individuals do and is gratified to see that effort is coming to fruition. As part of that process, the Commission sought comment on a number of issues relating to the assignment and administration of ten-digit telephone numbers for Internet-based TRS. In these comments, Sorenson addresses issues raised by the Commission in its *FNPRM*.

II. DISCUSSION

A. 911 Issues

In the *FNPRM*, the Commission sought comment regarding a number of issues related to the proper handling of 911 calls placed via VRS or IP Relay.³ It is imperative that the FCC's rules are conducive to allowing 911 calls to be handled in the most efficient and effective manner possible. To that end, the Commission should (1) require prioritization of callbacks from public safety answering points, designated statewide default answering points, or appropriate local emergency authorities (collectively, "PSAPs"); (2) allow interpreters to provide information to the PSAP independently, rather than simply interpreting; and (3) clarify that users of voice carry over ("VCO") may speak for themselves.

Prioritized Callbacks. The new rules already require that, as of December 31, 2008, each provider of Internet-based TRS must transmit to the PSAP the Automatic Number Identification ("ANI") of a deaf caller to 911.⁴ This rule allows the PSAP to reach the 911 caller in case it needs additional information, or otherwise needs to re-establish contact with the emergency caller.⁵ The benefit of this rule will be undermined, however, if callbacks from PSAPs in

³ See *FNPRM* ¶¶ 105-108.

⁴ See *Numbering Order* at Appendix B, Section 64.605(b)(2)(ii).

⁵ These callbacks are distinct from providers' obligation to "immediately re-establish contact with the Internet-based TRS user and/or the appropriate PSAP, designated statewide default

emergency situations are delayed while providers handle non-emergency calls that were already in the queue when the PSAP placed its call. The FCC should address this issue by explicitly requiring that providers grant callbacks from PSAPs to end users priority over all non-emergency VRS or IP Relay calls. One way to ensure that callbacks from PSAPs are granted precedence over other calls is for the provider to prioritize any calls to a number from which a 911 call has been placed for a specified period of time (*e.g.*, 30 minutes from the time the original 911 call was made).

Interpreter Role. Another measure the Commission should take to improve the efficacy of VRS 911 calls is to allow interpreters to provide information, where appropriate, and not simply interpret what the deaf user is signing. For example, an interpreter should be permitted to describe what he or she sees over the videophone and respond directly to any questions from the PSAP regarding what the interpreter sees via the video connection to the caller's premises. This would allow interpreters to describe the scene of the emergency to the PSAP and to provide potentially critical information to emergency personnel that they would not otherwise obtain.⁶ It would also allow interpreters to step in and describe a situation accurately when the deaf user is unable to do so. This will prove helpful when users become incapacitated after dialing 911, become overwrought by the emergency, or, in more extreme situations, feel threatened and believe that they will be harmed if they provide certain information. Similarly, interpreters

answering point, or appropriate local emergency authority and resume handling the call" in the event one or both legs of an emergency call are disconnected. *See Numbering Order* at Appendix B, Section 64.605(a)(2)(v).

⁶ For example, a video interpreter could warn emergency personnel if she sees a gun. *See, e.g.*, National Emergency Number Association ("NENA"), CG Docket No. 03-123, Presentation entitled "Video Relay Service – IP Relay Service – 9-1-1 Access," at 6 (filed Dec. 4, 2007). This is comparable to a warning that PSAP personnel could give emergency responders if the PSAP heard a gunshot, for example. With a VRS call, the gunshot would not be audible but the gun might be visible.

should be permitted to interrupt VRS 911 callers to ask for, or confirm, key data such as address or telephone number. During an emergency, time is of the essence and a distraught caller may need to be prompted to provide critical details to assist emergency personnel. Granting interpreters the discretion to interject into emergency calls and answer questions from PSAP personnel directly would greatly enhance the utility of VRS 911 calls and could provide emergency personnel with potentially life-saving information.

VCO. The FCC should make clear that its rules do not prevent users of VCO from speaking for themselves at the beginning of 911 calls. VCO callers typically speak for themselves during VRS calls, relying on interpreters only to relay the hearing user's speech back to the deaf caller.⁷ These users are likely to prefer to provide their name and location information directly and not have to rely on an interpreter to convey such information. Yet, read literally, the FCC's rules would seem to require interpreters to provide the name of the relay user and the location of the emergency, even when the caller is capable of providing the information directly to the PSAP.⁸ The Commission therefore should clarify that providers are permitted to allow a VCO caller to provide name and location information directly to the PSAP if that is what the caller desires. If the PSAP cannot understand the speech of the VCO user, the PSAP should be permitted to ask the interpreter to clarify, or ask the VCO user to have the interpreter speak for the user to facilitate communication with the PSAP.

⁷ See 47 C.F.R. § 64.601(27) (defining VCO as “[a] form of TRS where the person with the hearing disability is able to speak directly to the other end user” and noting that “[t]he CA does not voice the conversation.”).

⁸ See 47 C.F.R. § 64.605(a)(2)(iv); see also *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Report and Order, 23 FCC Rcd 5255, ¶ 16 (2008) (“*Interim Emergency Call Handling Order*”).

B. Registration

The Commission sought comment on the appropriate length of time necessary to allow existing users of Internet-based TRS to register with a default provider.⁹ Having users register with a default provider is important, as registration allows users to improve their accessibility by obtaining NANP telephone numbers and facilitates the effective handling of emergency calls by allowing providers to collect key information, such as the user's Registered Location. At this time, Sorenson does not support the imposition of a cut-off date upon which any Internet-based TRS user who has not registered with a default provider will lose the ability to use Internet-based TRS.¹⁰ Providers and the FCC should promote registration and educate users about the benefits of signing up with a default provider, but they should not refuse service to those individuals that choose not to register.¹¹ The Commission may have to consider a cut-off date in the future, however, if the need arises due to changes in circumstances.

The Commission also should protect consumers by imposing requirements on providers seeking to register users of Internet-based TRS. The Commission has stated that providers that cannot comply with the requirements set forth in its *Numbering Order* are not permitted to provide service without seeking prior approval from the FCC.¹² The Commission should expand

⁹ *FNPRM* ¶ 109.

¹⁰ *See id.*

¹¹ As a practical matter, it is unclear how VRS providers could enforce a registration cut-off date given the interoperability requirements imposed by the FCC. These requirements permit users to "dial-around" their default provider at any time. Thus, when a VRS provider receives a call from a user for whom it is not the default provider, the provider may have no way of knowing whether the user has failed to register or if the user has registered with another provider and is simply "dialing around" the default provider.

¹² *Numbering Order* ¶ 63.

on this statement by addressing particular situations that are likely to arise as the *Numbering Order* is implemented.

For example, the *Numbering Order* contemplates that all users of Internet-based TRS should register with a default provider and obtain a NANP number from that provider. In order for a user to be able to receive a number, his or her equipment or software must be capable of processing telephone numbers and complying with integrated E911 requirements.

Manufacturers or distributors of equipment or software used for VRS should therefore be required to certify that their equipment or software has the capabilities necessary to meet all of the requirements set forth in the *Numbering Order* and the FCC's rules. Otherwise, TRS providers may find themselves in the untenable position of being required to assign numbers to, or process calls from, users whose equipment is ill-suited for handling calls to and from numbers linked to the NANP. At a minimum, TRS providers should not be allowed to distribute equipment or software that does not comply with the FCC's interoperability and numbering rules.

Furthermore, for the protection of users in emergency situations – and to assure communication reliability – dynamic routing information associated with assigned numbers must be established by communication between relay equipment or software and the default relay provider. Approaches that introduce dependencies on other systems that unilaterally provide dynamic routing information without the direct involvement of the user's relay equipment or software should be prohibited.

Providers should not be allowed to receive compensation from the Fund for calls placed over equipment that is not interoperable or that otherwise fails to comply with – or prevents a provider from complying with – the Commission's rules. For example, certified VRS providers

should not be able to circumvent the Commission's rules by entering into agreements with companies that are not certified as providers, pursuant to which the non-certified company provides equipment and/or relay services that do not comply with the FCC's interoperability or other rules, but receives compensation through VRS or IP Relay minutes submitted to NECA via the certified provider. Nor should a provider be able to evade compliance with the interoperability or other rules by offering equipment to users for a fee. The relevant rules apply regardless of whether the equipment is sold to users or provided free of charge.

Similarly, the Commission should state clearly that any provider registering users must be prepared at the time of registration to assign a user a number within an acceptable period of time (*e.g.*, three days, but in any event, no more than one week from the date of registration). Users should not be misled into registering with a default provider only to find that they are placed on a waiting list because the provider is not capable of assigning the user a number in a timely fashion. Finally, because numbers are linked to E911 service, it is absolutely critical that any provider that offers numbers is fully prepared to handle 911 calls and provide E911 capability as required by the Commission's rules. As noted above, the Commission has already stated that providers that are not in compliance with the numbering and 911 rules may not provide service to an Internet-based TRS user without seeking prior approval of the Commission.¹³ The Commission should further clarify that providers not in compliance are not permitted to sign up new users, including by ported numbers. The FCC should promptly investigate any allegations of failure to comply with FCC numbering or 911 rules. If a provider is found not to be in compliance, the FCC should make that information public, and indicate that numbers should not be ported to that provider.

¹³ *Numbering Order* ¶ 63; *see also id.* ¶ 32.

C. Assignment of Multiple Numbers

The Commission has asked whether Internet-based TRS users should be allowed to obtain multiple numbers and if so, at what cost.¹⁴ Users should be entitled to receive separate numbers for different devices with unique IP addresses, much like hearing users can have different numbers for home telephones, cell phones and second lines. Users should be limited to only one number per device, however, unless the user obtains all numbers for a particular device from a single provider. Allowing users to obtain multiple numbers from multiple providers for a single device would create significant challenges, particularly when the user places an emergency call via 911. Each device needs to be associated with a single default provider that is responsible for ensuring that the device's network address information is properly updated in the central database and for receiving updates from the user regarding his or her Registered Location. In its Statement of Objectives, the FCC noted that the database vendor should design a system that can identify when multiple numbers are associated with a common URI.¹⁵ If multiple providers have assigned numbers to a single device, a single default provider should be designated and that should be a provider that both has the advance acknowledgment of the user, *and* has fully implemented all the numbering and 911 rules.

¹⁴ *FNPRM* ¶ 110.

¹⁵ See Request for Quotation, FCC RFQ 08000022, "Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) Telephone Numbering Directory Implementation and Operation Services: Statement of Objectives," at 4 (posted July 28, 2008), *available at*: <<https://www.fbo.gov/utills/view?id=d55b1808d99f22bf8d7b2b18e6191cde>> (noting that the system should be capable of reporting instances where multiple 10-digit phone numbers are linked to a common URI).

Although users should be entitled to multiple numbers, providers should only be compensated for the costs of providing a single number to each device.¹⁶ Any charges associated with assigning additional telephone numbers should be borne by the provider.

D. Toll-free Numbers

As the Commission acknowledged, some providers, including Sorenson, have already assigned toll-free numbers to users of Internet-based TRS.¹⁷ Users should not be forced to surrender these numbers, which are accessible by hearing callers, and which users likely have distributed to friends and colleagues. Toll-free numbers can be used if a PSAP needs to call back an emergency caller during the period before the FCC's new numbering rules take effect.¹⁸ Users should not have to surrender their existing toll-free numbers once geographic NANP numbers become available to them. Instead, the Commission should allow users to have both a geographic number and a toll-free number, provided that both numbers are assigned by the same provider.¹⁹

Users also should not be required to pay for their toll-free numbers. Providers should be responsible for the costs associated with users' numbers. As noted above, however, providers should be permitted to submit costs in connection with only one number (toll-free or geographic) per device.

¹⁶ Providers should also be permitted to submit costs for porting or any other associated costs.

¹⁷ *FNPRM* ¶ 111.

¹⁸ See Sorenson's Petition for Waiver, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196, at 1, 3-4 (July 11, 2008) (explaining that if a PSAP needed to call back an emergency caller – to get directions, for example – the PSAP could dial the users' toll-free number and the call would be routed to the deaf emergency caller via a video interpreter).

¹⁹ For purposes of 911 calls, if a user has both a toll-free and a geographic number, the provider should ensure that the geographic number is passed to the PSAP.

E. Signaling

The Commission invited comments on whether it should take any steps to facilitate the implementation of standards-based signaling between VRS providers.²⁰ Although Sorenson supports NeuStar's goal of transitioning to SIP-based devices, this transition is not essential to the implementation of the new numbering requirements. Given the tight deadlines imposed by the FCC, providers need to focus all of their technical resources on implementing the newly adopted numbering requirements. Once this major task has been accomplished, providers can turn their attention to additional complex technical issues, such as transitioning to SIP-based signaling.

F. Assignment of a Single Telephone Number to Multiple Services

In the *FNPRM* the Commission sought comment on whether functional equivalency requires that users of Internet-based TRS be permitted to have one NANP number for multiple devices or multiple services.²¹ As the Commission points out, hearing users currently may not have a single NANP number for more than one service (for example, hearing consumers must have separate numbers for their wireless and wireline services).²² In the context of TRS, the issue is further complicated by the different technical and regulatory issues governing different forms of relay. For example, VRS and IP Relay use different types of communications assistants ("CAs") and are subject to different speed-of-answer requirements. Given these complexities, the FCC should defer the issue of providing multiple services over a single telephone number and

²⁰ *FNPRM* ¶ 112 & n.263 (explaining that "devices that send video via the Internet to make VRS calls operate via specific call signaling protocols or standards that connect the two endpoints to the call").

²¹ *FNPRM* ¶ 113.

²² *Id.*

allow providers to focus their resources on the immediate challenge of implementing the new numbering system in the brief time allotted.

G. Security

The Commission sought comment on several security concerns raised by NeuStar.²³ Although the Commission may want to address such concerns in the future, it should refrain from imposing additional technical requirements on providers in the near-term as they focus on implementing and testing the new numbering system. The primary goal of both providers and the Commission should be the successful implementation of the new numbering system. Once the system is in place and users have access to NANP numbers and E911 services, then providers can work with the Commission to address additional issues, such as improving security.

H. Verification of Registration

The *FNPRM* includes several questions relating to verification of registration and methods for reducing the abuse of IP Relay.²⁴ Sorenson strongly supports additional measures aimed at reducing IP Relay fraud. However, Sorenson is in the business of providing VRS and IP Relay services to its users and opposes any barriers that would make it harder for users to place legitimate relay calls. Sorenson shares the Commission's concerns that any verification or validation requirements should not impose "undue burdens on legitimate Internet-based TRS users."²⁵ Moreover, it is unclear how providers can "verify that registration information itself is not fraudulent."²⁶

²³ *Id.* ¶ 117.

²⁴ *Id.* ¶ 118.

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

Unless and until a workable verification system can be developed that does not unduly burden legitimate users of Internet-based TRS, the Commission should take several actions to reduce IP Relay fraud. For example, consistent with the FCC's orders, providers should filter out IP Relay (but not VRS) calls from international locations. Providers also should be permitted to filter out calls from known fraudsters.²⁷ As an additional protection, providers should be allowed to refuse to relay calls involving financial transactions or credit card usage unless the IP Relay caller has registered with that provider as the caller's default provider.

I. Slamming Issues

Sorenson agrees with the Commission's assessment that the adoption of ten-digit numbers for Internet-based TRS users requires the adoption of rules to protect relay users from unauthorized default provider changes.²⁸ With the adoption of the new numbering rules, the relationship between a relay user and his or her default provider is similar to the relationship between a telephone subscriber and his or her preferred carrier. Just as voice customers are protected by slamming rules, relay users deserve similar protection from unauthorized changes in their default provider.

Sorenson has already filed proposed slamming rules that would offer TRS users the necessary protections.²⁹ The proposed rules are meant to apply only to relay providers, not to alter the existing slamming rules that apply to telecommunications carriers. While the proposed rules are very similar to the slamming rules already applicable to telecommunications carriers,

²⁷ *See id.*

²⁸ *Id.* ¶ 119.

²⁹ *See FNPRM* ¶ 119 & n.276; Attachment 3 to Letter from Ruth Milkman, Counsel for Sorenson, to Marlene H. Dortch, FCC Secretary, CG Docket No. 03-123 (May 15, 2008); Letter from Ruth Milkman to Marlene H. Dortch, FCC Secretary, and attached "Proposed Slamming Rules for TRS," CG Docket No. 03-123 (May 19, 2008).

they have been adapted to fit the relay situation. For example, the proposed rules address the fact that, unlike customers of telecommunications carriers, relay users do not pay for the services they use.

The proposed slamming rules are applicable to all providers of TRS that meet the requirements of 47 C.F.R. § 64.604(c)(5)(iii)(F) for eligibility to receive payments from the Interstate TRS Fund and that provide a form of TRS for which there is number portability. The proposed rules prohibit unauthorized changes in the subscriber's selection of a default provider. Before such a change in default providers can be made, the proposed rules require that the submitting provider must obtain authorization from the subscriber that the subscriber wants to change default providers, and verification of that authorization. Verification can be obtained in several ways, including a written or electronically signed authorization, authorization from the telephone number for which the default provider is to be changed, or authorization given to a qualified independent third party.

The proposed slamming rules detail the verification procedures needed to ensure that all changes in provider selection are properly authorized. These rules allow providers to use a written or electronically signed letter of agency to obtain authorization and/or verification of a subscriber's request to change his or her default provider, but only if the letter of agency conforms to the specific rules enumerated in Section XX.XX30 of the proposed rules. The requirements are largely the same as those imposed in the slamming rules that apply to voice services.

The proposed rules also include penalties for TRS providers that violate the slamming rules. Under Sorenson's proposal, a submitting provider that fails to comply with the applicable procedures shall be liable both to the Interstate TRS Fund and to the authorized provider. This is

different from the penalties imposed on slamming voice service providers, which are required to pay the authorized carrier and the customer. The difference between the rules reflects the fact that, in the TRS context, the TRS user is not the party who pays for the service. Specifically, Section XX.XX40 of the proposed rules states that any submitting provider that fails to comply with the procedures shall pay the Fund an amount equal to 50% of the amount paid to that provider by the Fund for the minutes generated by that subscriber after such violation and shall pay the authorized provider an amount equal to 100% of that same amount.³⁰

Section XX.XX50 of the proposed rules lists the procedures for resolving complaints regarding unauthorized provider changes. Unlike the slamming rules for voice services, which allow only customers to file complaints, the proposed rules would allow both providers and TRS users to file complaints. This difference is designed to accommodate the fact that in the TRS context, the user does not receive a bill and therefore may not be aware when his or her number has been switched to a new provider.

The proposed rules also allow users to freeze their choice of default providers. A provider freeze will prevent a change in a subscriber's default provider unless the subscriber gives the provider from whom the freeze was requested his or her express consent to lift the freeze. The proposed freeze rules are similar to the existing freeze rules for telecommunications carriers, with only minor differences to reflect the differences between TRS and voice services.

The proposed rules are similar to the slamming rules already in place for voice services and are designed to fulfill similar purposes. The Commission should make these proposed rules

³⁰ Consistent with the existing slamming rules, forfeitures should be limited to \$40,000 per violation of the TRS slamming rules. *See FNPRM* ¶ 121; 47 C.F.R. § 1.80(b)(4) Note.

effective by December 31, 2008, in order to protect TRS users from unauthorized changes in their default providers.

J. Consumer Privacy

The Commission has sought comment on what actions it should take to ensure the privacy and security of TRS consumers' call records or other personally identifiable account or usage information. As noted in the *FNPRM*, in May 2008, Sorenson submitted a proposed redline of the existing CPNI rules showing the changes needed to extend those rules to protect users of TRS.³¹ Consistent with that proposal, the Commission should afford TRS users CPNI protections that are virtually identical to those enjoyed by users of voice telephone services by applying the existing CPNI Rules to TRS, with only minor modifications meant to accommodate the unique nature of TRS. Specifically, these modifications involve the addition of references to communication through sign language and the inclusion of the term "TRS provider" throughout the CPNI rules.³²

The proposed CPNI rules, if applied to TRS, should replace the Commission's existing directives governing the use of TRS customer or call database information.³³ These existing

³¹ *FNPRM* ¶ 141 & n.358; Attachment 1 to Letter from Ruth Milkman, Counsel for Sorenson, to Marlene H. Dortch, FCC Secretary, CG Docket No. 03-123 (May 15, 2008) ("Proposed Revisions to CPNI Rules").

³² Sorenson's proposal also includes a provision directing TRS providers to use, disclose, or permit access to CPNI to the extent necessary to handle or route emergency calls or facilitate the dispatch of first responders. See Proposed Revisions to CPNI Rules, Section 64.2005(c)(4). In certain contexts (such as when a user places a 911 call through a provider other than the default provider), this provision might promote the FCC's goal of having TRS providers take all reasonable steps to handle emergency calls in a prompt and effective manner, without worrying about whether certain critical information is CPNI.

³³ The proposed rules would not affect other important protections, such as the prohibition against offering financial or other incentives to promote the use of TRS or the prohibition against providers contacting users and suggesting, urging or instructing them to make more TRS calls. Specifically, Sorenson proposes that the FCC adopt CPNI rules and vacate paragraphs 95 and 96

declaratory rulings are vague and confusing. The proposed CPNI rules will provide a much greater degree of certainty and clarity than the existing privacy rules and will better protect both consumers and providers.³⁴

Although extending the CPNI rules to TRS is an important step in protecting consumer privacy, the Commission should also take additional measures to address specific violations of users' privacy. For example, Sorenson understands that at least one VRS provider, during the course of in-home visits to users' homes, has been copying information from users' speed-dial lists and using that information to solicit the people identified via the speed-dial lists. Such invasions of privacy would never be tolerated if they involved hearing users: It is almost impossible to imagine telephone company employees visiting a customer's home to make repairs or install new services and gathering names and numbers from the speed-dial or Caller ID lists contained on the customer's telephones for purposes of soliciting those individuals. Accordingly, the Commission should act expeditiously to prohibit TRS providers from engaging in such practices.

The Commission should also take this opportunity to address other harmful practices in which some providers have been engaging. For example, the Commission should make clear that providers cannot offer financial or other incentives, such as t-shirts, gift cards, movie tickets, DVDs or any other one-time or ongoing incentives, to encourage users to change default

of the November 19, 2007 Declaratory Ruling, and all of the May 28, 2008 Declaratory Ruling. *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Report and Order and Declaratory Ruling, 22 FCC Rcd 20140 (2007) ("November 2007 Declaratory Ruling"); *Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, Declaratory Ruling, 22 FCC Rcd 8993 (2008) ("May 28, 2008 Declaratory Ruling").

³⁴ In addition to the proposed CPNI rules, consumers will also be able to protect their privacy by registering their telephone numbers with the Do-Not-Call Registry. See *Numbering Order* ¶ 22 n.71.

providers, keep the default provider for some period of time, or increase usage of service.³⁵ The Commission should also prohibit practices such as “calling clubs” or conference call bridges that generate VRS minutes for what is essentially a one-way broadcast of lectures or other material. Some providers appear to be using these types of bridges to bill the Interstate TRS Fund for multiple users listening to a single program or speech. These practices represent an abuse of the Fund and should be stopped immediately.

K. Cost Recovery Issues

The Commission has concluded that providers may seek compensation for their reasonable costs of complying with the requirements adopted in the *Numbering Order*. The Commission sought comment, however, on whether the costs of acquiring numbers should be paid for by the Fund.³⁶ As explained above, Sorenson does not support passing the costs of acquiring numbers on to users of Internet-based TRS. Instead, the Fund should reimburse providers for the costs of providing one number per device.³⁷ The costs associated with any additional numbers should be borne by the TRS provider. Providers should be allowed to pass these costs on to users if they choose to do so, though it is likely that the transaction costs associated with billing users will exceed the costs being recovered.

³⁵ Because of the relationship between devices and numbers, many providers will want to give a user a new device when the user selects that provider as his or her default provider. This decision to give a user a device should be permitted as long as the granting of the device is not conditioned on any minimum usage requirements.

³⁶ *FNPRM* ¶ 149.

³⁷ Providers should also be permitted to submit costs associated with porting.

III. CONCLUSION

Sorenson commends the Commission on its efforts to ensure that users of Internet-based TRS have access to telephone numbers and E911, and urges the Commission to adopt rules consistent with these comments.

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