

This is in response to the NBP Public Notice # 27 in which FCC asked for ideas to encourage innovation for the development of video devices as part of a National Broadband Plan. Much progress has been made with regard to video devices for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community and much more needs to be done. But I am concerned about the needs of the speech impaired. Dr. Bob Segalman clearly explained the problem in involving the STS community in his last paragraph in his recent filing:

“Those 114 responses were the best input that we could get in the time available from the 4 million non-deaf speech disabled Americans. This is not a representative sample. **There are no large organizations of people with speech disabilities and no one to identify them in large enough numbers to take a representative sample. Because people with speech disabilities often have other disabilities and identify with the other disability communities, they do not know each other. I grew up knowing only two other people with speech disabilities.**”

Unlike the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, the STS people are scattered and not organized sufficiently to be one, strong, united voice. It behooves the FCC to give additional weight to what well qualified speech impaired people like Dr. Segalman have to say. I've observed hearing people trying to understand a STS person and noticed that the listener uses both eyes and ears for comprehension.

As a deaf person who depends a great deal on visual cues such as facial expressions and body language in addition to lip reading for understanding non signing hearing people, I greatly appreciate the need for hearing people to use one's eyes as an aid to processing the (mis)spoken words of a speech impaired person. For these reasons, the development of “Video-Assisted Speech-to-Speech (VAS)” is much needed and FCC's support for this low incidence handicap group of people is much needed and valued.