

Re: CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

Dear Chairman Genachowski and Commissioners Copps, McDowell, Clyburn, and Baker,

I have heard about the rate cuts that you have proposed on Sorenson Communications. The rate cut is unfair and would cause Sorenson to go bankrupt. This would put many thousands of people out of work and many thousands of Deaf and Hard of Hearing people without their connection to the Hearing World. The other remaining companies would not be able to sustain the influx in customers and thus would not be reimbursed for services. This would be the end of Video Relay Services as we know it today.

I strongly believe that your goals as being Chairman and Commissioners of the FCC should be in ensuring that deaf individuals have access to VRS and encouraging improvements in VRS. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires the FCC to make available to all deaf individuals nationwide "functionally-equivalent" communications. You should adopt a rate that encourages continuing improvements in VRS technology and continues to improve services levels.

While hearing people have had constant technological advancements in their communication devices, such as cell phones. Technologies, for the deaf community, have advanced at a snail's pace up until the advancement of VRS. VP's and VRS technologies have come a long ways in providing "functional-equivalence" by providing ways to speak their native language and providing signmail, which is the equivalence of the hearing's voicemail. But yet there are still many more advancements to be made for the VP's and VRS services. This progress towards functional equivalence will be destroyed if the FCC does not establish a fair rate for VRS providers to improve VRS and make it more widely available.

I urge you to establish a fair and predictable rate for VRS that will encourage VRS providers to invest in improving VRS and reaching more deaf individuals. The law requires it and it is the right thing to do.

Sincerely,
Ray Bettencourt