

My employer, Sorenson Communications, has informed me that FCC's low rate proposal that would leave our Deaf customers without the vital VRS service they have come to expect and rely on. This proposal without a doubt would mean that my job and countless others would be in jeopardy in an economy where finding employment is already extremely difficult.

My passion in this situation comes not only from my stance as a valued Sorenson employee, but even more importantly as a former teacher for the Deaf. I have lived through the "before and after" of the TTY. I began teaching when the TTY was a Deaf person's only means of communication to the hearing world. THEN, still a teacher in the early 2000's, I had the pleasure of witnessing video relay services become a reality. I watched the Deaf students and Deaf community move closer to the equivalent communication they had longed for so long.

VRS had ground breaking influence in Deaf Education. Young Deaf students could finally have a face-to-face conversation with hearing parents who knew no sign language. Deaf teachers could have meaningful and helpful conversations with hearing parents. The list is endless!

Through VRS, I see on a daily basis Deaf people connecting with family members, friends, businesses, coworkers, government offices, pharmacies, doctor's office and the list goes on. These are calls that before would take thirty minutes and now take minimal time and done with vivid clarity. I have seen Deaf callers call VRS AFTER a doctor's visit because they didn't truly understand what was going on without an interpreter. The doctor and client had been writing back and forth for an hour in attempts to communicate about the medical situation. I've often relayed critical information via VRS that has saved lives!

VRS is not a luxury to the Deaf community. It is a crucial and vital necessity. It has become part of daily functioning that without could have detrimental personal, economical, and educational consequences.

Why would news shows the likes of 20/20 and 60 Minutes highlight VRS in special broadcast if it wasn't a worthy cause that is worth making known to world?

To the hearing world, take away your cell phones, Blackberries, iPhones, laptops, iPods all that technology that links you to the world. Suppose you are left with ONE desktop computer that doesn't work all the time, and you are given one Word program no internet, etc. How would that feel? That's how a Deaf person will feel if you take away VRS. Cut off to the world.

We plead to you propose an affordable rate that will allow us to maintain the valuable resources that it takes to provide video relay services to the Deaf.