

Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

June 15, 2010

Re: CG Docket No. 10-51

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I am writing in protest of the suggested closure of Canadian Sorenson Video Relay Service (SVRS) Centres, which provide Sign Language Interpretation between Deaf and Non-deaf individuals within the United States. The services provided are essential for providing equal access to Deaf individuals living in our non-Deaf world. The discontinuation of these services would not only be detrimental to the video relay service users (both Deaf and non-deaf) who are currently experiencing equitable and empowered services but it could mean a tremendous loss to the Canadian Deaf Community as interpreters may be left with no option but to relocate to the United States for employment.

Since the inception of SVRS, in Canada, the American Deaf Communities' waiting time to make a call has been drastically reduced. I have personally witnessed customers expressing not only satisfaction in the quality of interpreters but the expedited service. I also have noticed that the waiting time for callers is constantly sitting at zero minutes. A concern the Federal Communications Commission has expressed is the connection of calls between Canadian to Canadian which is not only prohibited but unethical as the cost of this service is covered by Americans for Americans. During the intense training of becoming a video relay interpreter for SVRS, it was clearly emphasized that company policy prohibits the connection of a call if one of the callers is not based in the United States. Since the onset of my employment, with Sorenson Communications, I have connected over 1,000 calls and never once have I witnessed a call that did not have one party in the United States. To make an assumption without verification is unfounded and costly to the American and Canadian Deaf Communities.

Closing the Canadian centres could have serious repercussions for Deaf Canadians. SVRS employs over 320 Canadians to provide professional and high quality service to Deaf Americans. With the closure of the Canadian centres, our interpreters may be forced to relocate to the United States for employment. This would create a horrific disempowerment of the Canadian Deaf Community who depends on these interpreters to access every day events that non-deaf people take for granted. The closures would also place an undue hardship on over 320 professionals who would lose a large portion of their income.

I urge you to reject any proposal to prohibit the use of Canadian call centers and interpreters. There is no justification for such a decision, and pursuing this course of action will harm both the American and Canadian Deaf Communities.

Sincerely,

Diana Kay MC., CCC., C.I., C.T.

cc: Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker