

Honorable Julius Genachowski, Chairman
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

I am writing to protest a recent proposal by the United States Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) that would prohibit United States providers of Video Relay Service (“VRS”) from locating call centers staffed with American Sign Language (“ASL”) interpreters in Canada. **CG Docket No. 10-51**

Sorenson Communications established itself in Canada to lighten the stress on an already strained profession in the U.S. When doing so, Sorenson Communications clearly emphasized the importance of respecting and adhering to the FCC mandates. Sorenson Communications has dutifully taken the responsibility of ensuring fraudulent minutes are not billed to the FCC.

Sorenson Communications is the only US Based VRS company with call centers outside of the US. Being a Canadian employee of Sorenson Communications we stringently follow the FCC mandate not to process Canada-to-Canada calls. I am confident in saying we respect and strictly adhere to the FCC regulations.

Video Relay Service is proving to be a vital link between deaf and hearing communities. As Canadian interpreters, we are patiently waiting for the opportunity to service Canadian callers and respect our ethics, our employer, and the FCC by not processing Canada to Canada calls. Because of regulatory delay by the CRTC and telephone companies in Canada, we do not yet have VRS in Canada at this time. However, TELUS is about to start a one year trial of the service, working closely with Sorenson Communications. Beyond the trial, it could be 2 or more years before we see VRS offered in Canada. The upcoming decisions you make are imperative to the future of successfully establishing VRS in Canada.

The decision to close the Canadian call centres would be a travesty for the Deaf and interpreting communities’ future potential in Canada and the United States. The decision to close call centres in Canada would result in hundreds of lost jobs and would have a direct impact of the service levels that American deaf callers have come to rely upon. Thus being said, if Canadian interpreters wanted to continue to work in the VRS field they would have to relocate leaving Canada and their communities with a shortage of interpreters.

I encourage you to reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,

Karen Anne Smith