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December 2, 2011

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Notice of Ex Parte Meeting, CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On November 30, 2011, Claude Stout, Executive Director, Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (“TDI”) met with Commissioner Michael Copps and Mark Stone, Chief of Staff to Commissioner Copps, to discuss a likely Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (“NPRM”) concerning Video Relay Service (“VRS”).

Mr. Stout shared TDI’s thoughts on possible changes to VRS. TDI expressed support for an NPRM that would incorporate questions about maintaining and improving not only the quality of service, but also the TRS program generally. Mr. Stout expressed that TDI and other consumer organizations look forward to creating a record on ways to improve the Commission’s TRS program consistent with the *Consumer Groups’ TRS Policy Statement - Functional Equivalency of Telecommunications Relay Services: Meeting the Mandate of the Americans with Disabilities Act* dated April 12, 2011 (the “Policy Statement”),¹ and urged the FCC to seek comment on whether the changes proposed in the NPRM are consistent with the goals of the Policy Statement.

Mr. Stout also discussed the fact that the Commission has taken measures to address fraud and abuse in the VRS program, and acknowledged that the NPRM may ask questions about whether the VRS rate methodology still needs to be improved or changed in order to reduce incentives and opportunity for fraudulent activity. He also noted that competition under the per-minute compensation system motivates service providers to surpass minimum standards of service, such as speed of answer. With respect to questions concerning alternative compensation methods, such as per user compensation, TDI expressed strong concerns as to the untested nature of these alternative methods, and discussed whether and how service quality standards, service benchmarks, interoperability requirements, consumer’s right to switch providers, and different compensation for heavy users could be an effective counterbalance to the incentives such a system will have for providers to minimize use of VRS which has higher variable costs than telecommunications services used by hearing consumers generally.

¹ See Ex Parte Notice of the Consumer Groups, CG Docket No. 10-51 (Apr. 12, 2011).

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Additionally, Mr. Stout pointed out the importance of considering *all* applicable costs in making any changes to VRS rates and/or methodology. For example, he suggested that the cost methodology should incorporate applicable expenses for improving technology and for customer outreach and education about the availability and use of VRS. He also raised questions about what data would be used to calculate costs, how costs would initially be calculated, and what methods might be used to adjust costs over time in a per user compensation mechanism.

TDI recommended that consumers not be restricted to one service provider for both fixed and mobile services, and explained that consumers may have different service provider preferences depending on the type of service and that consumers should be able to choose between different providers.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Tamar Finn

Tamar Finn

Counsel for TDI

cc (by e-mail):

Commissioner Michael Copps
Mark Stone