I strongly urge the FCC to decline the proposal that would require all Video Relay Service interpreters to hold an RID certification.

While MANY of the interpreters providing these services within our own company, and others, are already nationally certified through RID, we as service providers, rely on countless other OUTSTANDING interpreters who do not currently have RID national certification. These interpreters FILL our call centers and provide the highest level of skill and service to our customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Our customers have come to depend on this vital service for their day to day communication needs as well as for those more critical situations where fast, clear communication can mean the difference between life and death, as in the case of many of the 911 calls we process daily around the country.

I am a proud, nationally certified member of RID, and I encourage every interpreter I know to pursue the highest level of certification they can achieve. However, I do not believe that ONLY RID certified interpreters are capable of interpreting effectively in the Video Relay setting. There are many state-level credentialing systems established around the country. Each of these systems has value in indicating particular skill level for an interpreter working in varied settings and may be considered when making hiring decisions. In addition to being a certified interpreter, I am also a manager with Sorenson Communications and am involved with the screening and subsequent training of all incoming video relay interpreters. Utilizing the evaluation system we have in place, we are able to reliably screen prospective applicants and also take advantage of bringing on some impeccably skilled interpreters who may not yet have taken a test to obtain an RID certificate.

If this proposal passes, and the FCC specifically requires all VRS interpreters to be certified through RID, I am convinced that the VRS industry would no longer be able to adequately provide for the volume and quality of communication services needed. The lives of Deaf and hard of hearing consumers as well as interpreters would be negatively impacted and communication access for this community would most-likely be taking a step backward, rather than forward.