

This is my third comment I'm submitting as I am not sure my first 2 got through - one sent via regulations.gov, and one emailed to ECFS -

I am not deaf, but I know firsthand how VRS works. VRS allows people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to use the "phone" to communicate just like people who can hear. With VRS they can do the things we take for granted - make a doctor's appointment or call a child's school. VRS puts people who are deaf on a more level playing field.

The changes being considered by the FCC would undo much of this progress. VRS relies largely on highly skilled American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters and specially designed VRS equipment and technology. The FCC wants to drastically cut the rate they pay VRS companies for providing this service. Obviously, this will have an immediate and negative effect on the ability of VRS companies to employ and train qualified interpreters. Furthermore, the FCC suggests reducing service even more by mandating off-the-shelf equipment and software.

If the FCC takes away skilled ASL interpreters and innovative equipment, VRS as we know it today won't exist. This would be a huge step backward for the rights and opportunities of Americans who are deaf. Please help protect the rights of deaf Americans by preventing these proposed changes.