

Chairman Genachowski,

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am writing in response to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) request for comments on the "Structure and practices of the video relay service (VRS) program and on proposed VRS compensation rates." I am very concerned about these proposals and how they will affect people's safety.

VRS is a lifeline. It allows those who are deaf or hard of hearing to conduct business, connect with family and friends and do many other things over the phone that many hearing people take for granted. Most important, though, VRS is how they access local emergency 911 service. In an emergency they know that when they place a 911 call it will be answered immediately. Their location will be known. And, specially trained American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters will be there to make sure local emergency responders know exactly what help they need. You can't imagine how frightening it is to think that someone might not be able to get help because of long hold times, poorly trained interpreters, or bad equipment.

Cutting the rates paid to VRS providers as low as the FCC proposes will only reduce the service quality that people with hearing impairment currently depend on. How will these companies hire and keep skilled ASL interpreters on staff when the government is proposing dramatic cuts to their compensation" How will 911 calls be answered immediately when there are fewer interpreters and longer hold times" How will users know that their VRS will work when using a videophone from WalMart instead of the specially designed videophone from a VRS provider"

I hope the FCC has answers to all of the questions before it considers changing the current system.  
Christina Czosek