

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

I am the parent of a Deaf child and a video interpreter who uses sign language to relay Video Relay Service (VRS) calls between deaf and hearing people. Because of my daughter and the work I do with the deaf community, I understand first-hand how critical VRS communication is to deaf people and the hearing people with whom they communicate.

I understand the FCC is proposing changes to the VRS program. I am very afraid of how these proposals will negatively impact the quality of service, interpreting, and equipment. The changes will also result in reduced access of VRS services for the deaf. Most frightening to me is the potential removal of Deaf Americans'™ access to enhanced 911. The thought of my daughter not being able to get help in an emergency is unbearable.

I do not agree with your proposals!

VRS empowers deaf people to communicate on an EQUAL basis with hearing people. Because of VRS, deaf people now have the opportunity to place calls and communicate the same way hearing people have been communicating for years. Deaf people use VRS to compete in the workplace, access emergency services, stay in touch with family and friends, contact their doctor, and communicate in all the same ways hearing people do with their phones.

I am afraid that if the FCC proposals go into effect, deaf people will not have choices in their equipment and will no longer have access to the quality VRS equipment we now use. I am also afraid that if your proposals go into effect, it will degrade the quality of service I provide, thereby affecting the level of FUNCTIONAL EQUIVALENCE deaf people experience and have come to rely on. If the FCC wants change and wants to provide functional equivalency - and wants us interpreters in the middle to assist, this is not the way to do it. These ideas are a huge step in the wrong direction. The FCC cannot possibly consider their proposals to be a reasonable replacement for the high-quality, unique VRS technology we use every day. Please, I implore you to keep VRS innovative and progressive so that Deaf Americans will have the EQUAL access to communication as do hearing Americans.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Maureen Walton
Fishers, IN