

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am a VRS interpreter and my wife is a Deaf consumer of VRS services. In both my work with the deaf community and my personal life, I see the importance of VRS communication to deaf people and the hearing people they need to communicate with.

The FCC is proposing changes to the VRS program. I have read them and I cannot see how these proposals will do anything but harm the provision of video relay services! The changes will result in reduced access of VRS services for the deaf and stifle innovation in improving videophone equipment.

VRS gives deaf people the ability to communicate with hearing people with a speed and fluidity which was before impossible. Because of VRS, my wife and other deaf people now have the opportunity to communicate over the phone ... helping to overcome a major barrier to products, services and employment. Deaf people use VRS to work in places they couldn't before, stay in touch with family and friends, contact their doctors, conduct personal business, access emergency services.

I worry that the FCC proposals will limit the equipment choices of deaf people. I am also concerned that they won't have access to the quality VRS equipment we now use. I fear that your proposals will degrade the quality of service I and my colleagues will be able to provide, affecting the communication deaf people experience and have come to expect. If the FCC wants change and wants functional equivalency - and wants interpreters to assist, this is not the way to do it. These ideas are steps in the wrong direction.