

Chairman Genachowski,

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

When was the last time that we, as a country, backtracked on progress"

VRS is a quantum leap forward in allowing Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing individuals to have equal access to communication -- one of the very foundations of the American economy in 2012. The proposed changes to VRS will tell this minority population that the accommodations and support previously extended to them by the Federal government are now being turned back.

Is that what America does"

The argument has been made that the lower reimbursement rates will leave the interpreting staff in tact, and only require the removal of certain equipment.

CAN you keep the soldiers without the armor"

CAN you keep the teachers without the books"

If you are looking to save money, why don't you focus on cutting a few F-22s, instead of cutting the communication lifeblood of a minority population who has fought as long for equality as any other in our country"

Or hey, maybe you can keep the pilots, and just cut the planes. Does that work"

I work as an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. I interact with deaf people on a day-to-day basis. I have seen the way Video Relay Service (VRS) has changed the lives of deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing people. VRS has empowered all of these groups to communicate with each other in their preferred language. Relaying these calls has given me an appreciation for the power of communication and the way it affects daily living.

As an interpreter, I am opposed to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) proposals to change VRS. I am concerned that if these proposals go into effect, the VRS system will decline, resulting in reduced access to VRS services for the deaf. This would violate the mandate of the

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) that gives deaf Americans the same opportunity to compete - on an equal basis - with hearing people. The FCC should uphold the mandates of the ADA.

I disagree with the FCC's proposals to take away deaf people's choice in VRS equipment and service. This is not right and is not reasonable! Deaf people must be afforded the same freedom of choice and opportunities that hearing people have. Do not undo the progress we have made under the ADA.

As a person very close to the deaf community, I understand the power of VRS communication and the empowering nature of VRS. Please consider my comments - the comments of an ASL interpreter. VRS is a critical service! Please protect it! Alek Lev