

Chairman Genachowski,

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am a hearing person writing this on behalf of and at the request of a deaf woman, Rosemary Decker, who does not have email. She submitted a message about using VRS for communication with friends and family, but when she tried to submit a second message regarding her need for 911 service, she received a message on this site that said she must enter a code that was sent to her email address. Although she had an email address, she never uses her computer and does not have an email program to receive that code. She was quite upset that her concerns could not be expressed related to 911 and other emergency calls. She is a senior citizen, and has a disability that causes her hands to shake. She had asked me to come and type her message on the computer because she doesn't know how to use it, and has difficulty typing and writing. She asked me to express to you her fear that a computer program or an unskilled interpreter, the likely consequence of reducing the pay rates for VRS interpreters, will not be able to understand her clearly, and would miscommunicate her messages if she called for a doctor appointment, a nurse information line, or an emergency vehicle, either ambulance or fire department. I am submitting this message for her in the hope that you will actually read it and not simply count it as another tick on your list of emails received.

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 my family's safety.

VRS is a lifeline. It allows me to conduct business, connect with my family and friends and do many other things over the phone that many hearing people take for granted. Most important, though, VRS is how I access my local emergency 911 service. In an emergency I know that when I place a 911 call it will be answered immediately. My location will be known. And, specially trained American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters will be there to make sure my local emergency responders know exactly what help I need. You can't imagine how frightening it is to think that I might not be able to get help for me or my family 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 I 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 I know that my VRS will work when I'm using a videophone from WalMart instead of the specially designed videophone from my VRS provider"

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

Rosemary Decker