

Chairman Genachowski,

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am a hearing person who understands the crucial nature of Video Relay Service (VRS) communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing people and for the hearing people who communicate with them. My spouse is deaf and his ability to use VRS is crucial to his ability to communicate with me, friends, family, and to conduct personal business - just as anyone else expects to be able to do. To change or reduce quality and services is to place him and other deaf persons back into the dark ages of 20 years ago when we first met and there were no services that allowed us to communicate with each other.

Like other deaf couples, despite the fact that I can hear, we simply waited until we could see each other face to face in order to communicate. No phone calls at work, no ability for my husband to conduct his own business without relying on his wife, no communication with his children, friends, or other family members. It was the 90's and there were no computer video software, no texting - not even one-way pagers!

Let treat all of our citizens, deaf, hearing, and other persons disabilities with the respect and dignity they deserve and allow them the ability to conduct their lives without having to depend on others when there is the technology available that allows them to do so.

I am opposed to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) recent proposals to alter the current VRS program deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans currently use.

I am not in favor of changing compensation rates for VRS providers. This cannot help but result in negative changes to VRS equipment and interpreting. I am concerned that the changes would result in a decline in VRS quality, longer hold times, and less interpreter training.

I oppose the FCC's proposals to require deaf or hard-of-hearing people to use equipment that is designed by and for hearing people and government-mandated software. Why fix a VRS system - equipment and service - that already is working"

Please consider the Americans with Disabilities Act's mandate to provide access to functionally-equivalent communication for deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans. Do not negate the progress that has already been made in this area. Keep quality VRS for deaf and hard-of-hearing Americans!

Paulette Knarr