

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Received & Inspected

NOV 26 2012

FCC Mail Room

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am writing in response to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) request for comments on the "Structure and practices of the video relay service (VRS) program and on proposed VRS compensation rates." I am opposed to the changes being considered.

VRS has created a more level playing field for people like me who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, empowering us to communicate via videophone with anyone at any time in our native language, American Sign Language. The nature of the work I do requires that I be able to use the phone to communicate with colleagues, clients and business associates regardless of whether they are hearing or deaf. Without reliable, high-quality VRS service I would not be able to do my job effectively.

The changes the FCC is considering would drastically change the nature of the VRS I depend on. One of the aspects of VRS that makes it such an effective way to communicate is the quality of the videophone technology used and the fact that the products provided by VRS companies have been developed specifically with the needs of the deaf – my needs – in mind. Yet, the FCC is considering changes that would, instead, force us to use off-the-shelf products and government-mandated software. Using products developed by and for people who are hearing would be a huge step backwards! The FCC cannot consider this to be a reasonable replacement for the high quality, specialized VRS technology we use every day.

The rate changes being considered by the FCC would also directly affect my ability to access VRS, as well as the reliability and quality of service I depend on. If the FCC slashes the rates paid to VRS providers, as suggested in its Public Notice, many companies will simply stop providing this essential service. This will put me and all members of the deaf community at a significant disadvantage.

In my view, VRS today is a shining example of what Congress intended when it passed the Americans with Disabilities Act 22 years ago. It is absolutely essential that any changes to the current program maintain the access, innovation and reliability that define VRS today.

Sincerely,

Name LINDA EUBANK

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 1148 9th CLARKSTON WA 99403

Telephone Number 509-758-9269

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Listed below _____

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Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
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Washington, DC 20554

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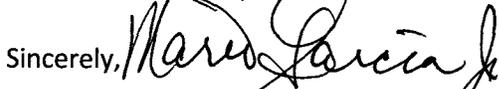
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Sincerely,



Name Mario GARCIA JR

Title, if appropriate Retired

Address 7521 VICTORY Ave, Sacramento CA 95828

Telephone Number 916-226-1412

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I am deaf and VRS is how I stay in touch with my family and friends who are not deaf. I'm sure that hearing people don't think about what it means to be able to pick up the phone and call anyone any time or anywhere they want. But for me, this means everything. VRS has changed my life.

I am alarmed that the FCC is proposing to dramatically change the VRS program. Why is the FCC going out of its way to fix something that isn't broken?

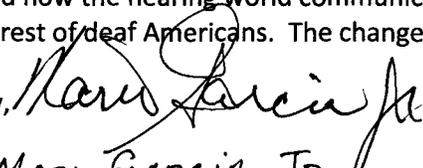
I think there are two crucial reasons to keep the current VRS system in place.

First, I like the company I do business with. I don't want to be forced to switch companies because the one I work with has gone out of business.

Second, I don't want to have to buy and set up my own VRS equipment. I got my equipment at no cost from my VRS provider. They installed it and continue to maintain it. It would be unfair to now shift this burden to me and other deaf people. If the government wants to prevent deaf people from connecting with others and using VRS, this is a good way to do it.

The VRS program works for people who are deaf. It's how we communicate every day with the hearing world and how the hearing world communicates with us. Any changes to the program must be in the best interest of deaf Americans. The changes being considered by the FCC are not.

Sincerely,


Name MARIO GARCIA JR

Title, if appropriate Retired

Address 7521 Victory Ave., Sacramento CA 95828

Telephone Number 916-226-1412

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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
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Washington, DC 20554

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FCC Mail Room

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

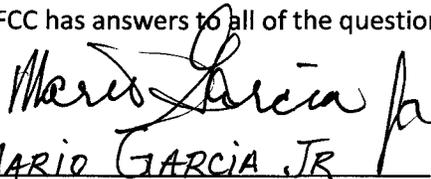
I am writing in response to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) request for comments on the "Structure and practices of the video relay service (VRS) program and on proposed VRS compensation rates." I am very concerned about these proposals and how they will affect my family's safety.

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 service quality I currently depend on. How will these companies hire and keep skilled ASL interpreters on staff when the government has just cut what they are willing to pay them by \$2 an hour? 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.

Sincerely,



Name MARIO GARCIA JR

Title, if appropriate Retired

Address 7521 ^{VICTORY} VICTORY Ave., Sacramento CA 95828

Telephone Number 916-226-1412

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
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NOV 25 2012
FCC Mail Room

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

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Sincerely,

Name John P. Melberus

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 27 Allen Path, Faribault, MN 55021

Telephone Number 507-412-5046

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List #3026

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
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FCC Mail Room

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I think there are two crucial reasons to keep the current VRS system in place.

First, I like the company I do business with. I don't want to be forced to switch companies because the one I work with has gone out of business.

Second, I don't want to have to buy and set up my own VRS equipment. I got my equipment at no cost from my VRS provider. They installed it and continue to maintain it. It would be unfair to now shift this burden to me and other deaf people. If the government wants to prevent deaf people from connecting with others and using VRS, this is a good way to do it.

The VRS program works for people who are deaf. It's how we communicate every day with the hearing world and how the hearing world communicates with us. Any changes to the program must be in the best interest of deaf Americans. The changes being considered by the FCC are not.

Sincerely,

Name David E Moldenhauer

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 9401 Polk St NE #200
Blaine, MN 55434

Telephone Number _____

Lib ABODC 0

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

Received & Inspected

NOV 28 2012

FCC Mail Room

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

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In my view, VRS today is a shining example of what Congress intended when it passed the Americans with Disabilities Act 22 years ago. It is absolutely essential that any changes to the current program maintain the access, innovation and reliability that define VRS today.

Sincerely,

Name Richard J Jantz Jr

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 5200 Bryant Ave. N, Mpls, MN 55430

Telephone Number 612-424-4038 VP

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First, I like the company I do business with. I don't want to be forced to switch companies because the one I work with has gone out of business.

Second, I don't want to have to buy and set up my own VRS equipment. I got my equipment at no cost from my VRS provider. They installed it and continue to maintain it. It would be unfair to now shift this burden to me and other deaf people. If the government wants to prevent deaf people from connecting with others and using VRS, this is a good way to do it.

The VRS program works for people who are deaf. It's how we communicate every day with the hearing world and how the hearing world communicates with us. Any changes to the program must be in the best interest of deaf Americans. The changes being considered by the FCC are not.

Sincerely,

Name

Richard J. Jantz Jr

Title, if appropriate

Address 5000 Bryant Ave. No., Mpls, MN 55430

Telephone Number 612-424-4036 VP

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November 19, 2012

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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street SW
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I am not deaf, but I know firsthand how VRS works. VRS allows deaf or hard-of-hearing people to use the "phone" to communicate comfortably and easily just like people who can hear. In this way, it has changed the lives of so many people who are deaf, especially those who are not comfortable with the written word. With VRS they can do the things we take for granted – make a doctor's appointment, call a child's school, or simply order a pizza. VRS puts people who are deaf on a more level playing field.

The changes being considered by the FCC would undo much of this progress. VRS largely relies on highly skilled American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. These are the people who relay the conversation between the deaf and the hearing participants. The FCC wants to drastically cut the rate they pay VRS companies for providing this service. Obviously, this will have an immediate and negative effect on the ability of VRS companies to employ and train qualified interpreters. It will also likely have a sobering effect on students and employees willing to learn ASL.

The FCC has also suggested that VRS can be just as effectively provided through government-mandated software that is used on off-the-shelf equipment like common videophones, computers, the iPad, or a smart TV. While such equipment can provide a convenient backup solution, it can't replace the videophones and other technologies provided by the VRS providers. These have been specifically designed to take into account the special needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

If the FCC takes away skilled ASL interpreters and innovative equipment, VRS as we know it today won't exist. This would be a huge step backward for the rights and opportunities of Americans who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Sincerely,

Name

Tim Jordan

Title, if appropriate

Address

10549 Kentucky Ave S, Bloomington MN 55438

Telephone Number

952-941-8018

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Federal Communications Commission
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445 12th Street, SW
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NOV 20 2012

FCC Mail Room

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am deaf. I use my videophone to communicate with my loved ones, my friends and co-workers. I like that I can call these people any time of day and use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. Without the quality VRS service I receive, I would not be able to communicate with these people.

I understand the FCC is considering changes to VRS. I do not agree with the FCC's proposals. They would change the way I communicate and I am afraid the quality of VRS would be bad.

My focus is on *quality* VRS! I do not want to use "off-the-shelf" products and software designed by hearing people. One of the aspects I like about my VRS equipment is that it gives me features that my hearing family and friends have. I like using technology that was created for deaf people.

I do not want the rate changes being considered by the FCC to go into effect and my ability to enjoy VRS as it now is to change. I'm worried that some VRS companies will go out of business or stop providing the good services I use every day. I don't want the quality of service to change and for deaf people to have to take a step backwards. It is critical that the VRS program continues to deliver deaf-oriented products and quality service. Please do not take that away from us!

Sincerely,

Name: Denny Voreck
Title: CEO of Prometheus Entertainment Group, LLC
Address: 10845 W. Piute Ave, Sun City, AZ 85373
Telephone Number: 702-475-4731

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I am not deaf, but I know firsthand how VRS works. VRS allows people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing to use the "phone" to communicate comfortably and easily just like people who can hear. In this way, it has changed the lives of so many people who are deaf. With VRS they can do the things we take for granted – make a doctor's appointment, call a child's school, or simply order a pizza. VRS puts people who are deaf on a more level playing field.

The changes being considered by the FCC would undo much of this progress. VRS largely relies on highly skilled American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. These are the people who relay the conversation between the deaf and the hearing participants. The FCC wants to drastically cut the rate they pay VRS companies for providing this service. Obviously, this will have an immediate and negative effect on the ability of VRS companies to employ and train qualified interpreters.

The FCC has also suggested that VRS can be just as effectively provided through government-mandated software that is used on off-the-shelf equipment like common videophones, computers, the iPad, or a smart TV. While such equipment can provide a convenient backup solution, it can't replace the videophones and other technologies provided by VRS providers. These have been specifically designed to take into account the special needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

If the FCC takes away skilled ASL interpreters and innovative equipment, VRS as we know it today won't exist. This would be a huge step backward for the rights and opportunities of Americans who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Sincerely,

Name Daryl Van Deusen

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 5072 Cutesy Dr., South Bloomfield, OH 43103

Telephone Number 740-983-4505

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Sincerely,

Name Barb La Bonte

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 113 E. Thomason Dr. Clyde, Ohio

Telephone Number _____

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Sincerely,

Name Chris La Bonte

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 113 E. Thomson Dr. Clyde, Ohio

Telephone Number _____

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/FCC

Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

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NOV 26 2012

FCC Mail Room

Dear Madam Secretary,

I was notified by my deaf sister who lives in Columbus Colony Housing for the Deaf in Columbus, Ohio that funding for interpreters for her TTY service may be cut or discontinued. I ask that you reconsider this cut in the budget.

This service has allowed my sister who until recently had limited contact with other deaf people to reach out and make her own appointments, contacted friends, deaf and hearing alike, and to continue regular contact with family members.

My sister and I talk once a week and use the interpreters services. Previously I worked at a medical office in our community. Deaf people were able to call the office, explain their illness or problems. They could also contact the Pharmacy for assistance in obtaining their medications.

Please find another way to trim the budget.

Respectfully,



Kathy Elmlinger

NOV 26 2012
FCC Mail Room

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Sincerely,

Name Jason Riggie

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 1981 Country Rd G New Richmond, WI 54017

Telephone Number 651-334-2642

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VRS has created a more level playing field for people like me who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, empowering us to communicate via videophone with anyone at any time in our native language, American Sign Language. The nature of the work I do requires that I be able to use the phone to communicate with colleagues, clients and business associates regardless of whether they are hearing or deaf. Without reliable, high-quality VRS service I would not be able to do my job effectively.

The changes the FCC is considering would drastically change the nature of the VRS I depend on. One of the aspects of VRS that makes it such an effective way to communicate is the quality of the videophone technology used and the fact that the products provided by VRS companies have been developed specifically with the needs of the deaf – my needs – in mind. Yet, the FCC is considering changes that would, instead, force us to use off-the-shelf products and government-mandated software. Using products developed by and for people who are hearing would be a huge step backwards! The FCC cannot consider this to be a reasonable replacement for the high quality, specialized VRS technology we use every day.

The rate changes being considered by the FCC would also directly affect my ability to access VRS, as well as the reliability and quality of service I depend on. If the FCC slashes the rates paid to VRS providers, as suggested in its Public Notice, many companies will simply stop providing this essential service. This will put me and all members of the deaf community at a significant disadvantage.

In my view, VRS today is a shining example of what Congress intended when it passed the Americans with Disabilities Act 22 years ago. It is absolutely essential that any changes to the current program maintain the access, innovation and reliability that define VRS today.

Sincerely,

Name Shirley Dortch

Title, if appropriate _____

Address 4141 Deep Creek Rd #137, Fremont, CA 94555

Telephone Number 510-585-9778 VP

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Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street, SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

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FCC Mail Room

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am deaf. I use my videophone to communicate with my loved ones, my friends and co-workers. I like that I can call these people any time of day and use American Sign Language (ASL) to communicate. Without the quality VRS service I receive, I would not be able to communicate with these people.

I understand the FCC is considering changes to VRS. I do not agree with the FCC's proposals. They would change the way I communicate and I am afraid the quality of VRS would be bad.

My focus is on *quality* VRS! I do not want to use "off-the-shelf" products and software designed by hearing people. One of the aspects I like about my VRS equipment is that it gives me features that my hearing family and friends have. I like using technology that was created for deaf people.

I do not want the rate changes being considered by the FCC to go into effect and my ability to enjoy VRS as it now is to change. I'm worried that some VRS companies will go out of business or stop providing the good services I use every day. I don't want the quality of service to change and for deaf people to have to take a step backwards. It is critical that the VRS program continues to deliver deaf-oriented products and quality service. Please do not take that away from us!

Sincerely,

Name:

GUNDY VORECK

Title:

Retired

Address:

10845 West Pulte Ave, Sun City, AZ 85373

Telephone Number:

623-561-8471

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November 19, 2012

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary
445 12th Street SW
Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am writing in response to the Federal Communication Commission'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 that the changes being considered by the FCC will destroy a program that is vitally important to people who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

I am not deaf, but I know firsthand how VRS works. VRS allows deaf or hard-of-hearing people to use the "phone" to communicate comfortably and easily just like people who can hear. In this way, it has changed the lives of so many people who are deaf, especially those who are not comfortable with the written word. With VRS they can do the things we take for granted -- make a doctor's appointment, call a child's school, or simply order a pizza. VRS puts people who are deaf on a more level playing field.

The changes being considered by the FCC would undo much of this progress. VRS largely relies on highly skilled American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. These are the people who relay the conversation between the deaf and the hearing participants. The FCC wants to drastically cut the rate they pay VRS companies for providing this service. Obviously, this will have an immediate and negative effect on the ability of VRS companies to employ and train qualified interpreters. It will also likely have a sobering effect on students and employees willing to learn ASL.

The FCC has also suggested that VRS can be just as effectively provided through government-mandated software that is used on off-the-shelf equipment like common videophones, computers, the iPad, or a smart TV. While such equipment can provide a convenient backup solution, it can't replace the videophones and other technologies provided by the VRS providers. These have been specifically designed to take into account the special needs of the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

If the FCC takes away skilled ASL interpreters and innovative equipment, VRS as we know it today won't exist. This would be a huge step backward for the rights and opportunities of Americans who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Sincerely,

Name

Valentina Ph.D.

Title, if appropriate

Assistant Professor - School of Social Work, UST/SCU

Address

3625 E. 43rd St. Apt. 505 Minneapolis, MN. 55406

Telephone Number

612-963-3767

Do not alter or
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CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

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In my view, VRS today is a shining example of what Congress intended when it passed the Americans with Disabilities Act 22 years ago. It is absolutely essential that any changes to the current program maintain the access, innovation and reliability that define VRS today.

Sincerely,

Name Sandra Buchholz

Title, if appropriate _____

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Telephone Number 612-424-4029

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November 19, 2012

Marlene H Dortch, Secretary
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Room TW-A325
Washington, DC 20554

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

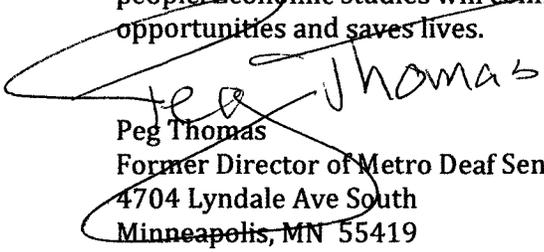
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I was the Executive Director when in 1983-86 our community-based Metro Deaf Senior Citizens intervened in a rate case ~~and~~ with the help of the Metropolitan Senior Citizens, the Department of Defense, and other parties. We won the rights to set up telecommunications in Minnesota, and because it was heard by Justice Green as a part of the ATT monopoly case in Washington D.C. these services were mandated across the country. They were deemed vital in courts, and by Public Utility Commissions around the United States. In accord, they were set up by the "Baby Bells" at the time. Since then, with mergers, acquisitions and renaming of companies, the original intent of this mandate might have been lost.

Off-the-shelf software can help. However the problem that we had then, and that occurs now, is that the Deaf community is a subset of total market. As a result, products for the Deaf are not market driven. In a wink, with no regulations, software can come and go—and it does. Look at the video games, apps, and programs which don't sell to a certain level (regardless of their benefit) and are then discarded.

This service is vital. And, for the most part, the requirements for Deaf people add costs that are not bringing in profits to private companies.

Thomas Edison who invented the telephone called it his biggest failure because it was supposed to be a rehabilitative device for his deaf wife. It behooves us to make this right. The VRS system has evolved over these 30 years to become a telecommunications service that provides jobs, emergency and nonemergency supports and communication for Deaf people. Economic studies will confirm that this communication service creates financial opportunities and saves lives.


Peg Thomas
Former Director of Metro Deaf Senior Citizens, St. Paul MN
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Minneapolis, MN 55419
612-280-7505

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If the FCC takes away skilled ASL interpreters and innovative equipment, VRS as we know it today won't exist. This would be a huge step backward for the rights and opportunities of Americans who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Sincerely,

Name Crystal Lannert

Title, if appropriate _____

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Telephone Number 715-222-8605

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If the FCC takes away skilled ASL interpreters and innovative equipment, VRS as we know it today won't exist. This would be a huge step backward for the rights and opportunities of Americans who are deaf and hard-of-hearing.

Sincerely,

Name

Kathy Gindinger

Title, if appropriate

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Telephone Number

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