

Chairman Genachowski,

CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 10-51

I am an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter. I am opposed to the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC's) Public Notice proposals to change the Video Relay Service (VRS) system as well as VRS providers' compensation rates. I am opposed to these proposals because I think they will have a negative impact on the quality of service, interpreting, and equipment. I am opposed to the proposals because I feel they will eventually result in reduced access to VRS services for the deaf.

The FCC's proposals are in direct opposition to what Congress enacted when it passed Title IV of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to make the phone system accessible to those who were at a disadvantage. Title IV empowered deaf people to communicate in a way that is similar (and functionally equivalent) to hearing people. Because of VRS, deaf people can compete in business. Because of VRS, deaf people can stay connected to family and friends. Because of VRS, deaf people have access to emergency 911 services. Do not undo what Congress approved!

The ADA mandates equal communication access for deaf people. Deaf people should have the same choices in equipment that hearing people have. Deaf people should also have the same choice in choosing their communication service that hearing people do. It is the FCC's responsibility to ensure functional equivalency in communication for all deaf Americans.

As an ASL interpreter who is on the front lines of interpreting for the deaf, I know how important VRS communication is for both the deaf, hard-of-hearing, and hearing communities. It is crucial! Do not undo all the progress we have made under the ADA! Kara Brooks