

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to express my grave concern regarding attempts by the Consumer Electronics Industry to "gut" a crucial portion of the CVAA that deals with consumer choice. I live in New York City, which is of course one of the major markets effected by the CVAA. After considerable work with our cable provider, my husband and I are now reaping the benefits of increased availability of described programming, and this is an important achievement.

As you know, however, the CVAA clearly states that TV's and TV-like equipment are to be fully accessible to people who are blind. Since the onset of digital TV, I no longer have access to the controls on my own television set. Imagine if it suddenly became impossible for you to adjust your own set. Would you consider that acceptable? . Congress clearly intended to remedy this situation through the CVAA. Now, I understand that the Consumer Electronics Industry Lobby is insisting that accessible television sets be made available only through consumer request directly to manufacturers. We would have no ability to go into a store and make a purchase. I can only guess how long it would take for the manufacturers to respond; moreover, we would have no ability to compare and contrast features, or to judge whether the product offered under an accessibility request was comparable in quality to those sold on the open market. To put it mildly, this is unacceptable. It continues to keep those of us who are blind or visually impaired in the kind of separate and inferior position that was outlawed years ago in this country. Now that the technology is available to produce televisions that are accessible to and useable by us, the industry is on the wrong side of 50 years of civil rights law. Separate is not equal!!

In the strongest terms possible, I urge the FCC to uphold the law as written. Do not allow a situation to emerge where blind people have to beg for the right to control our own televisions. I ask again, would you, our FCC colleagues, find this an acceptable resolution if it were you or your family's ability to enjoy a resource that is such a staple of American life and culture?

Thank you for giving these comments your full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Luxton Gourgey,
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