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Kris Monteith
Acting Bureau Chief
Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Reply to the Coalition of E-Reader Manufacturers' Petition for Waiver from CVAA
Accessibility Requirements, CG Docket No. 10-213

Dear Ms. Monteith:

My name is Sophie Trist, and I have been blind since birth. I am writing to you because I am in strong opposition to the petition filed by the Coalition of E-Reader Manufacturers, requesting that their devices be exempt from the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Act (CVAA) which requires all devices with advanced communication services (ACS) capabilities to be fully accessible to those with disabilities.

In this day and age, more and more books are becoming digitized. The Amazon store alone grants access to over two million titles, and Barnes & Noble grants access to thousands more. I can't access these millions of titles without purchasing an Apple device, which is much more expensive than an E-reader. In addition, many books become available simultaneously in digital and print versions. Without an accessible E-reading device, I am unable to buy a book as soon as it comes out. When all my friends are talking about the new book they just purchased yesterday on their Kindle, I feel excluded.

Our country is passionate about equal rights for all its citizens. The Coalition's request for exemption from the CVAA blatantly violates this principle. It deliberately excludes the millions of Americans who are blind or visually impaired. Equal opportunity calls for equal access. If the blind and visually impaired are to have equal opportunities in the world, which is what we are all striving for, we must have the same access to information as our sighted peers. And for that to happen, it is imperative that E-reading devices be made accessible.

The Coalition claims that to make E-reading devices accessible, its members would have to completely rewrite their software. This is most untrue. It would be very easy to make E-readers accessible to the blind community. To make content accessible to the visually impaired, it must simply be programmed to be read auditorily. Not only would it be easy, it would be profitable. I guarantee that if the Coalition added audio features to its E-reading devices, millions of blind people would purchase them and begin buying books. Taking a little time to make these products accessible would open up a whole new market for them!

The Coalition claims that the primary purpose of devices such as Amazon's Kindle and Barnes & Noble's Nook is reading, not ACS. While this may be true, ACS is still a major feature of these devices. All of my friends who own such devices use them to post to Facebook, browse

the internet, and share books with one another. The CVAA says that ALL devices that provide ANY ACS services should be made accessible to individuals with print disabilities. The Coalition's request for exemption from this law goes flagrantly against the very essence of what the CVAA is trying to accomplish.

The department of Justice and the Department of Education have forbidden K-12 school districts and collegiate institutions from using inaccessible technology. However, the Coalition sells millions of E-reading devices to school systems all over the country. There are thousands of blind students in America, and I am one of them. These students suffer academically when the Coalition sells inaccessible E-readers to their schools, because they cannot access the same material as their sighted classmates and thus cannot learn effectively. In addition, many textbooks are now becoming available as E-books. By refusing to make E-reading devices accessible, the Coalition is denying textbooks to students who need them in order to advance their education.

This discrimination cannot be allowed to persist. I strongly urge the FCC to reject the Coalition's request for a waiver, and I strongly urge the Coalition to work on making its products more accessible. It would benefit the Coalition financially, and it would close the divide between blind people and their sighted peers.

Sincerely,
Sophie Trist