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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Circ 1974).

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
October 1, 2001

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COMMISSIONER COPPS APPLAUDS NATIONWIDE 711 FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS RELAY SERVICES

Washington, DC -- Commissioner Michael Copps issued the following press statement on October 1, 2001, the date on which all carriers in the United States must implement 711 as the access number to reach Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS).

I am pleased that as of today we have significantly improved access to telecommunications services for the millions of Americans with hearing and speech disabilities, and for the millions of others who communicate with these citizens. Consumers across the country will now be able to use the same three-digit number – 711 – to reach all Telecommunications Relay Services.

A simple, easy-to-remember number will encourage more people to use TRS to communicate with friends and associates who have hearing and speech disabilities. Consumers will no longer need to remember dozens of different TRS numbers as they travel from state to state in our mobile society. And TRS users will be able to put one number on business cards and other forms, making it easier for people to contact them.

Facilitating access to quality relay services is one important step towards closing the communications divide for those with disabilities. Access to communications and information is the key to unlocking the doors of opportunity in this Information Age. We must make sure that those doors are open – and remain open – for all Americans, and not locked shut for some.

While today marks a step forward, we must not rest on our accomplishments. It is not enough merely to implement nationwide 711. We must also establish public – private partnerships to publicize the availability of 711 and to increase awareness of Telecommunications Relay Services generally. And we must continue to expand access to communications technology, including advanced telecommunications, for those with disabilities. We must all do what we can to attain Congress' vision that those with disabilities have access to functionally equivalent services so that these citizens can participate fully in our society.