

STATEMENT
COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. McDOWELL

Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Internet-based Captioned Telephone Service Declaratory Ruling – CG Docket No. 03-123

I am delighted to support this terrific order. Improving the human condition is at the heart of our mission. And this item does exactly that.

The decision to include Internet Protocol captioned telephone relay service (IP CTS) as a telecommunications relay service (TRS) that is eligible for funding is consistent with Section 225 of the Communications Act. Also, it is consistent with past Commission actions to include new technologies in the TRS fund as those technologies are developed. Finally, and most importantly, it helps the hard of hearing, and all Americans, because it supports the use of new technologies to facilitate real-time telephone conversations where a hard of hearing person is a calling party. I am particularly encouraged that the service enabled by this technology is automated and is invisible to both parties to the call.

I look forward to resolution of the remaining IP CTS issues regarding cost recovery, the mandatory nature of the service, and certification. We should take all necessary steps, as soon as possible, to encourage the development and implementation of new technologies that make communications easier and more transparent for the hearing impaired public.

Many thanks to the Bureau for their terrific work on this wonderful order, as well as to John Hunter of my office.

But most importantly, I'd like to say thank you to those members of the deaf and hard of hearing community for their advocacy.