



NEWS

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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).

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FCC COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL ON EXPANDING ACCESS TO TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES

Washington, D.C.—On July 1, 2012, the video description rules adopted by the Federal Communications Commission pursuant to the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act went into effect. In addition, the agency's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau announced a new \$10 million program to assist deaf-blind individuals with access to communications equipment, also under the same law.

In response, FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel stated:

"With the start of this month, we reach a new milestone in accessibility with video description. It has been a long time in the making. After all, it was 22 years ago that the Americans with Disabilities Act first became law. It was more than a decade ago that the FCC first plowed new ground and required video description to accompany popular television programming. Though the courts brought this early progress to a halt, Congress stepped in to right this wrong with additional authority and a groundbreaking new law—The Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act.

"Though there has been delay, the benefit is no less sweet. Now, more than 21 million visually-impaired Americans will be able to access television programming with video description. This widens the range of news and entertainment options available to the visually-impaired and helps facilitate full participation in Twenty-First century life.

"We would not have reached this point without the cooperative work of so many providers and distributors of video programming and the tireless advocacy of so many champions in the disabilities community. Today's establishment of the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution Program is more proof positive that the good work continues. I look forward to continuing to work with all stakeholders to see that the implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act continues to expand access to communications technologies and opportunities across the country."

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