

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Update on the Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act*, Presentation (July 19, 2013)

Twenty-three years ago the Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law. Upon signing, President George H.W. Bush famously said: “Let the shameful walls of exclusion finally come tumbling down.” Well put. After all, this was a phenomenal piece of civil rights legislation. It laid the foundation for the meaningful inclusion of 54 million Americans with disabilities in our modern civic and economic life.

Three years ago, I had the privilege to join President Barack Obama at the White House when the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act was signed into law. Just as two decades earlier the Americans with Disabilities Act tore down walls, this new law pried open doors of opportunity and access for the Internet era.

I had the honor of working with Senator Mark Pryor and others on this historic legislation. A signed copy of the final law hangs on my wall, right by the entry to my office. I will always be proud that I had the opportunity to play a small role in its passage.

But I am even prouder of the Commission. This agency has done yeoman’s work implementing the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act. This is a law with many twists and turns. Advisory committees, clearinghouses, distribution programs, captioning obligations, description duties, interfaces, guides, menus—there is a lot to tackle. But across our many Bureaus and Offices, the goal has been simple: putting policies in place that will extend opportunity and access in the digital age. That’s a goal worth fighting for.

Like the Americans with Disabilities Act before it, the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act is destined for the history books. So thank you to the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, Wireless Telecommunications Bureau, Media Bureau, and Office of General Counsel for your work to date. Thank you also to the consumer electronics industry, telecommunications companies, and providers and distributors of video programming for your efforts. Finally, we would not be celebrating our success without the tireless advocacy of the many champions of Americans with disabilities who fought for this law and pressed for its just implementation.