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For Immediate Release

FCC SETTLES INVESTIGATION OF RELAY SERVICE PROVIDERS
Agreement Addresses Violations that Lead to Waste, Fraud, and Abuse of the Fund That Supports Services for Consumers with Hearing and Speech Disabilities

WASHINGTON, February 15, 2017 – The Federal Communications Commission today announced a \$9.1 million settlement with two companies which provide telecommunications services to consumers with hearing and speech disabilities. In addition to a monetary penalty for improper billing, the settlement with telecommunications relay service (TRS) providers Purple Communications and CSDVRS repays the TRS Fund and establishes a 5-year compliance plan to ensure that services going forward incorporate the required checks.

The TRS Fund reimburses telephone carriers and other providers for providing relay services to consumers with hearing and speech disabilities. To ensure that TRS is used for its intended purpose and that providers are only compensated for service provided to eligible individuals, for some forms of TRS, providers must verify the registration information of TRS users before issuing those users the ten-digit numbers necessary to use the service. The Commission established a clear legal standard for this verification in a 2008 order.

In December 2015, the Commission fined Purple for failing to properly verify customers and for submitting improper bills for reimbursement from the TRS Fund. The settlement resolves that proceeding, as well as additional investigations and pending matters against the companies. Today's action by the Commission approves a settlement that resolves all pending enforcement matters involving Purple and CSDVRS.

The Commission's adoption of this settlement reflects FCC Chairman Ajit Pai's recently announced process change that any settlement (formally called a "Consent Decree") stemming from a Commission action will be voted on by the Commission.

Action by the Commission February 13, 2017 by Order (FCC 17-10). Chairman Pai, Commissioners Clyburn and O'Rielly approving. Commissioner O'Rielly issuing a separate statement.

A copy of today's Consent Decree is available at https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/FCC-17-10A1.pdf

A copy of the 2015 Forfeiture Order is available at <http://go.usa.gov/ckQwp>

A copy of the 2014 Notice of Apparent Liability is available at <http://go.usa.gov/ck8gS>

A consumer guide on the Telephone Relay Service is available at <http://go.usa.gov/ckkXX>

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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. Cir. 1974).