

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Structure and Practices of the Video Relay Service Program*, CG Docket No. 10-51;
Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities, CG Docket No. 03-123

Last week, I had the chance to meet Betsy, a speech pathologist whose organization helps children with disabilities communicate through the use of technology. She told me about a young girl named Mia. Mia is entirely nonverbal, meaning she can't say words or communicate with any sounds. Yet technology has given her a voice. Mia has a smartphone with an application that can speak for her with the push of a button. Thanks to this technology, Mia has been able to participate at school and tell her parents "I love you"—things that were not possible for her to do previously.

Mia's story is a reminder that one of the most important roles technology plays is in bridging the communication divide for those with disabilities. And as technology advances, we are seeing more and more private sector innovations that help individuals with hearing, speech, or visual impairments communicate with the world around them.

At the FCC, we need to support that trend. One way we do that is through the Commission's TRS Fund, which subsidizes the cost of VRS—a service that allows people with hearing or speech disabilities to make phone calls over a broadband-enabled videophone. VRS helps ensure that Americans with hearing or speech impairments do not lose out on the connectivity essential to talking with friends and family, calling for help in an emergency, or accessing job opportunities.

Given the significant role VRS plays in the hearing loss community, it is incumbent on us to ensure the program is available for those who need it. So I am glad we are taking steps today to increase accountability in the program, but also to make it more accessible for everyone who benefits from it.

Thank you to the staff of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau for your work on the item. It has my support, and I look forward to seeing the record we receive on the Further Notice.