

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Misuse of Internet Protocol (IP) Captioned Telephone Service*, CG Docket No. 13-24;
*Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing
and Speech Disabilities*, CG Docket No. 03-123

Internet Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) has helped many Americans who are hard of hearing communicate—for instance, by reading captions to understand a phone conversation. The program has exploded in popularity over the past several years, from 83 million minutes of use in 2013 to 457 million minutes in 2018. IP CTS costs are now projected to be \$913 million this year versus \$168 million in 2013.

All of these costs must be covered by the FCC's Telecommunications Relay Services Fund. So to meet this demand, the FCC established a funding mechanism as an interim measure in 2007. But we need to make some permanent reforms to make IP CTS service sustainable in the long run. And that's exactly what we do today.

The existing interim contribution approach relies on contributions to the TRS Fund from service providers based on their interstate end user revenues. As IP CTS has grown, interstate service providers alone have carried the burden of funding the service; intrastate providers don't contribute at all. Today, we level the playing field and require an equitable allocation of the burden to interstate and intrastate providers alike. I want to be clear here: we're not making the fund bigger. We're simply ensuring that every telecommunications and interconnected VoIP provider contributes in a fair manner. This will put IP CTS on a firmer footing for the hard of hearing today and well into the future.

My thanks to all of the Commission staff who have worked on and assisted with this proceeding: Bob Aldrich, Diane Burstein, Eliot Greenwald, Michael Scott, Patrick Webre from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Terry Cavanaugh, Richard Mallen, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel; Susan Lee and Virginia Metallo from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Andrew Multz and David Schmidt from the Office of the Managing Director; Sharon Lee from the Enforcement Bureau; Karen Sprung from the Wireline Competition Bureau; and Belford Lawson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.