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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC GRANTS FLEXIBILITY TO RELAY SERVICE PROVIDERS  
TO PRESERVE COMMUNICATIONS ACCESS FOR  
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES**

***Continuing the Commission’s Keep Americans Connected Initiative, TRS Providers  
Granted Waivers for At-Home Call Handling During Coronavirus Pandemic***

WASHINGTON, March 16, 2020—The Federal Communications Commission today granted Telecommunications Relay Service providers temporary waivers to better enable American Sign Language interpreters to work from home in order to maintain relay services during the current coronavirus pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or have a speech disability. The Commission also temporarily waived certain other TRS rules to provide flexibility to providers and allow them to continue to provide these vital services. Telecommunications relay services are supported through the FCC-administered Interstate TRS Fund, and they ensure access to the communications network for hundreds of thousands of Americans with disabilities. This action to ensure accessible communications remain available is yet another step forward in the FCC’s Keep Americans Connected initiative.

“The FCC is taking decisive action to ensure that communications services of all kinds are available to Americans whose lives have been disrupted during the coronavirus pandemic,” said FCC Chairman Ajit Pai. “This latest step—making regulatory adjustments to enable Americans with disabilities to continue to rely on telecommunications relay services—is an important component of our overall goal of ensuring that we Keep Americans Connected.”

“At a time when Americans are focusing on reducing in-person interactions, the need for reliable communications services is critical. This is no less true for Americans with disabilities, and that is why we quickly and proactively granted these waivers. We will continue to look for ways to help ensure accessible communications are available during the pandemic,” said Patrick Webre, Chief of the FCC’s Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, which includes its Disability Rights Office.

The [Video Relay Service](#) at-home waivers follow a successful FCC pilot program on increased at-home translation by TRS providers. The success of that effort resulted in the Commission adopting [new rules](#) allowing more flexibility for these services. The instant waivers respond to the urgency of the current pandemic as the new rules are still in the process of going into effect.

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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).*