



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3005

February 25, 2022

146

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman, the Federal Communications Commission
Re: Proposal to Expand the TRS Fund Contribution Base for Support of VRS and IP Relay
CG Docket Nos 03-123, 10-51 and 12-38
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel:

I write regarding a delayed FCC proposal that a constituent has informed me will impact providers who serve the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS), which helps speech and hearing-impaired individuals make and receive telephone calls. In authorizing these services through the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, Congress required the Commission to ensure that “interstate and intrastate” TRS are available to the extent possible. Congress also required that funding rules for the program “shall generally provide” that interstate TRS costs are recovered from interstate providers and intrastate costs are recovered from intrastate providers. But, at the program’s inception, the Commission only recovered costs from interstate service providers and noted that it would review this “interim” approach at a later date.

On November 25, 2019, the Commission adopted a Report and Order modifying the cost recovery rules for Interpret Protocol Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS), so that providers of intrastate voice communications services must contribute to the TRS Fund for support of IP CTS as Congress intended. Moreover, two key TRS services were not covered by that Report and Order – video relay service (VS) and Internet Protocol (IP) Relay.

I am writing to inquire regarding the status of the Federal Communications Commission’s Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) issued on November 20, 2020. In the NPRM, the FCC proposed to complete its work and expand the TRS Fund contribution base for support of video relay service (VS) and Internet Protocol (IP) Relay to include intrastate, in addition to interstate, end-user revenues from providers of telecommunications and Voice over IP (VoIP) services. Comments were due by April 19, 2021, and reply comments by May 3, 2021.

These efforts to expand the contribution base are non-controversial. As I understand it, time is of the essence, or another year will pass with interstate providers shouldering more than their fairshare of the costs for TRS services. Such a delay could impact the number of providers available to the speech and hearing-impaired communities that utilize these vital services in their everyday lives.

At your earliest convenience, please provide me with an update on the timing of this proceeding. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Gottheimer", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Josh Gottheimer
MEMBER OF CONGRESS