

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities (CG Docket No. 03-123).

Since being recognized as a form of TRS in March 2000, Video Relay Service (VRS) has seen tremendous growth. Given the huge positive impact VRS has had on the lives of so many Americans, I anticipate that its growth will only continue. Although most providers are using compatible equipment, certain providers have modified their software so that it cannot be used to contact other providers' services. This has meant that a VRS user wishing to access different providers must keep multiple terminals which is cumbersome and frustrates the goal of functionally equivalent access to a dial-tone. Also troublesome is that, in the event of an emergency, a VRS user with access to only one provider could effectively be denied access to emergency responders, raising serious public safety concerns. I am pleased that we conclude that restricting access to competing VRS providers is inconstant with the functional equivalency mandate for TRS. Today's Order continues the Commission's work to ensure that all Americans have full access to communications and emergency services.