

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN KEVIN J. MARTIN**

Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; E911 Requirements for IP-Enabled Service Providers, CG Docket No. 03-123 and WC Docket No. 05-196, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; Speech-to-Speech and Internet Protocol (IP) Speech-to-Speech Telecommunications Relay Services, CG Docket Nos. 03-123 and 08-15, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

Today we take additional steps to help improve the quality of life for individuals with disabilities. We adopt a ten-digit numbering system for Internet-based Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). We also seek comment on ways to improve Speech-to-Speech service (STS) and whether IP STS should be compensated from the Interstate TRS Fund. Through these actions, we make progress in fulfilling our statutory goal of ensuring that every person has equal access to this nation's communications services.

We are well aware that there are many Americans with hearing or speech disabilities that depend on TRS services for their daily communication needs. The Commission remains committed to improving the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by ensuring that they have the same access to communication technologies as people without such disabilities.

In March, the Commission committed to adopt an order providing a ten-digit numbering system for Internet-based TRS by the end of June and to require that the ten-digit numbering system be implemented no later than December 31, 2008. I am pleased that we fulfill these commitments today. Ten-digit numbering will enable Internet-based TRS users to make and receive calls like anyone else, eradicating another barrier that stands in the way of functional equivalency. Functional equivalency means individuals with disabilities having access to the same services as everyone else. This equal access is vital to accessing jobs, education, public safety, and simple communications with family, friends, and neighbors.

I also support our inquiry into ways to improve STS and our tentative conclusion that IP STS is a form of TRS eligible for compensation from the Interstate TRS Fund. IP STS has the potential to allow a broader range of individuals to communicate. By not being constrained to a specific piece of equipment that resides in a particular location, users of this service would have tremendous flexibility in how and where they use this service. Moreover, individuals with disabilities would have access to new technologies and, specifically, be able to realize the benefits of broadband services.

I want to assure those of you with hearing or speech disabilities that we will not stop actively working to fulfill your need for functional equivalence. We could not have taken today's actions without your valuable input. We thank you for your participation in our proceedings and look forward to working with you and the service providers to implement the ten-digit numbering system and to improve speech to speech service. It is by working together that we can best ensure that the tremendous advances in communications are enjoyed by *all* Americans.