

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER DEBORAH TAYLOR TATE**

*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 continue to recognize our responsibilities to insure all our citizens have access to communications services by issuing this NPRM. We seek comment regarding the TRS regulations and specifically whether or not the Commission should amend specific regulations applicable to Speech-to-Speech (STS) services including whether to require that the Communications Assistant (CA) remain with the call for a minimum of 20 minutes, and that providers offer the STS user the option of having her or his voice muted so that the other party to the call would only hear the STS CA re-voicing the call (and not also the voice of the STS user). The draft NPRM also seeks comment regarding ways in which the Commission can ensure that STS users calling 711 (the nationwide access code for state relay providers) may promptly reach an STS assistant (CA) to handle their calls, including, for example, requiring TRS providers to use an interactive menu that allows the STS user to reach an STS CA as the first option.

These are important issues for STS users, and the changes proposed will likely result in the more efficient handling of STS calls. As the Commission continues to consider the needs of all our consumers in this digital age, I especially value the input of those who know first-hand what rules will most effectively serve those consumers who will benefit most.