

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

**Re. *Closed Captioning of Video Programming; Closed Captioning Requirements for Digital Television Receivers, CG Docket No. 05-231 and ET Docket No. 99-254.***

Today's decision takes several important steps to update and enhance our closed captioning rules. It improves our complaint process. It makes it easier for consumers to get immediate help with specific captioning problems. And it clarifies some important captioning issues as we continue to transition to digital television.

This is as it should be. For individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing, closed captions provide a critical link to news, entertainment and emergency information. By acting on many of the issues raised in the petition filed by Telecommunications for the Deaf, the National Association of the Deaf, Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, the Association for Late Deafened Adults and the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network, we help meet our obligation to keep our rules current and ensure that video programming is accessible to everyone.

But while this item represents progress, many open issues remain. For instance, I have publicly called on the Commission to immediately implement the October 2007 recommendation (reiterated in June 2008) from its Consumer Advisory Committee to convene a working group on digital closed captioning that includes representatives from the broadcast, cable and satellite industries, consumer electronics manufacturers and retailers, and captioning providers and consumers. The working group would: (1) identify current and anticipated problems with the transmission and display of digital captioning; (2) evaluate the captioning capabilities of digital equipment; and (3) develop solutions to ensure that captions are passed through intact to the consumer.

I hope that we act on that recommendation soon. In the meantime, today's decision is a good step forward and I'm pleased to support it.