

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: Developing a Framework for Next Generation 911 Deployment, Notice of Inquiry; FCC-10-200, FCC Docket No. 10-255

While we may at times disagree on the way forward on some issues before the Commission, I think we can all agree that the safety of the American public must always be our top priority. In point of fact, though, the challenge in this item is not all that different than the rest of our agenda: how to take a system designed for the voice telephony world and ensure that it keeps pace with our Twenty-first century communications networks. Better promoting the safety and protection of the American people today means, in large measure, realizing and applying the potential of new and evolving technologies.

Each year, 240 million 911 calls are made. Although service is available to 99 percent of the U.S. population, availability is not the same thing as maximizing convenience, viability and effectiveness. So today we ask important questions about how to enhance the breadth and depth of information communicated in an emergency situation. Next Generation 911 is all about thinking beyond traditional voice communications. The future of 911 includes the potential for transmitting text, photos and video, and it doesn't take much imagination to realize how bringing this to reality can improve public and personal safety. But it will require a great deal of focus to ensure a smooth transition to IP-based communications capabilities. And to make it as seamless as possible will require real skill and dedication at all levels of government and all levels of public safety. But we know it's worth it because NG911 tools can save lives.

This Notice of Inquiry (NOI) also begins to fulfill one of our responsibilities under the recently enacted Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, which directed the FCC to enable Next Generation 911 access for individuals with disabilities. This NOI asks important questions about how emergency communications can take into account the needs of individuals with hearing or speech disabilities. It is just one of many proceedings where I hope we will think creatively about how to ensure persons with disabilities can be full participants in our society and entitled to its full protections.

I commend the Chairman for bringing this important item to the full Commission for consideration. I particularly want to thank the staff of the Public Safety and Homeland Security for their hard work and thorough analysis. I look forward to working with my colleagues, with the staff and with all NG911 stakeholders as we continue to strengthen the requirements and capabilities of emergency communications.