

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

*Re: Video Description: Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, MB Docket No. 11-43*

The promise of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 is predicated on the ability of 54 million Americans with disabilities to access the technology and media necessary to fully participate in today's communications world. This Report and Order on Video Description is one big step forward after years of delay. There are some broadcasters and cable networks which continued to provide video description even after the courts vacated the FCC's previous rules in 2002 and I salute CBS, FOX and TNT for their strong commitment to their consumers with disabilities.

The blind and visually impaired community has been waiting for action on video description for a long time. As President Barack Obama said at the CVAA bill signing, "It was a victory won by countless Americans who refused to accept the world as it is, and against great odds, waged quiet struggles and grassroots crusades until finally change was won." In that spirit I wish to thank the champions in the disabilities community; the sponsors of the legislation that made these actions possible: Representative Ed Markey and Senator Mark Pryor; and the work of Karen Peltz Strauss among others in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and the Media Bureau.

My hope going forward is that the work product of those providing this important service is strong and serves the disabilities community in the best possible manner. I also would like to think that as the technology improves there will be ways to increase this service to the greatest possible audience and we will not have to accept the choice of Spanish language service or video description. With this Report and Order we take the next step in the implementation of this crucial service and it is vital that we remain vigilant in order to ensure full compliance. We must provide the framework so that a commitment is met to inform consumers when and where this service will be available.

With a July 1, 2012 deadline the full expectation is that the necessary pieces will be in place to seamlessly provide video description. I wish to thank Commissioner Mignon Clyburn for her dedication on this issue. Although I would have preferred and I am not convinced it would be too burdensome on companies to comply even earlier, I am pleased that the Chairman and my colleagues have moved up the timeline to support the long-delayed hopes of Americans with disabilities. Given the delay experienced by blind and visually impaired viewers for such an essential service we should be doing everything in our power to make sure they don't wait a day more than is necessary.