

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI**

Re: *Speech-to-Speech and Internet Protocol (IP) Speech-to-Speech Telecommunications Relay Services*, CG Docket No. 08-15; *Telecommunications Relay Services for Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, CG Docket No. 03-123.

Seventy-nine years ago, Congress created the Commission “to make available, so far as possible, to all the people of the United States, without discrimination . . . a rapid, efficient, Nation-wide, and world-wide wire and radio communication service.”¹ And Congress reiterated that message 23 years ago with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Today we reaffirm our commitment to this vital mission by strengthening the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) program used by so many Americans with disabilities.

The reforms we make to the Speech-to-Speech component of TRS may appear incremental for some, but they can be monumental for those in need. The muting requirement, for example, is a simple fix to ensure that the message of those with a speaking disability comes through clearly. Extending the minimum stay-time should allow fuller, longer discussions for users. And making Speech-to-Speech service easier to access is just as important; there’s no reason why 711 can’t offer the full range of TRS programs, including Speech-to-Speech service, from the same straightforward, interactive menu.

None of the reforms adopted today would be possible without the hard work of the Commission’s Disability Rights Office—Gregory Hlibok, Marilyn Abraham, Helen Chang, Rosaline Crawford, Jackie Ellington, Elaine Gardner, Eliot Greenwald, Solita Griffis, Christina Hebert, John Herzog, Roger Holberg, Sherita Kennedy, Cheryl King, Diane Mason, Judy Miller, Traci Randolph, ShaVonne Morris, Suzy Rosen Singleton, and Dana Wilson—along with their front-office support: Kris Monteith, Karen Peltz Strauss, and Robert Aldrich. Thank you for everything you’ve done not only with respect to today’s item but in your ongoing work to support Americans with disabilities.

¹ 47 U.S.C. § 151.