

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: *Closed Captioning of Video Programming*, CG Docket No. 05-231; *Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. Petition for Rulemaking*, PRM11CG.

Video programming plays an important role in our daily lives. It provides entertainment, influences our culture, and, most importantly, informs us. In fact, this medium can be a valuable public safety tool. For example, I remember as a kid relying on blizzard and frostbite warnings during the winter months from our local television station. And that mattered not just for me, but for the thousands of people in our town who worked outside, as my dad often did, who was extremely hard of hearing.

For those in our country who are deaf or hard of hearing—a population that is growing as the baby boomers age—this tool can be limited without effective closed captioning to timely and correctly relay what is being said on the screen. We are fortunate that our current technological capabilities readily enable this service. With this in mind, Congress required closed captioning in the Telecommunications Act of 1996 so that television content would be made more accessible to all Americans. For over sixteen years, the Commission has implemented such rules, and today we build upon this foundation to better ensure that television captions are of sufficient quality, without putting undue burden on providers. This item is the result of a tremendous amount of input and cooperation from industry participants and from the advocacy community. It strives to achieve a workable balance, and I am, therefore, pleased to support it.

While the order adopts new quality standards and technical compliance rules, the further notice seeks comment on a number of outstanding issues that demand quick resolution. To that end, I am pleased that the Commission has set an effective date of January 15, 2015 so that all of the pieces can come together at the same time, which will make compliance easier.

On the longer term, more difficult questions that are teed up in the notice, such as outage reporting, we need more data and analysis before they can be resolved. I encourage commenters to provide the Commission with a robust record.

Today's item took a great deal of hard work and leadership to get across the finish line. I applaud Commissioner Clyburn, who I understand set the wheels in motion when she was interim chairwoman. Chairman Wheeler also deserves credit for placing it on the agenda. Finally, I thank the dedicated staff who worked on this important effort.