

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

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

Take a moment and picture a baboon, lifting a lion cub up in his arms, carrying him like a baby to the edge of a tall, flat outcrop. He comes to a stop and raises the cub in the air for all the animals in the savanna to see. The sun's rays spotlight the newborn as the animals begin to celebrate and bow down to pay respects to their king's new son.

If this description sounds familiar, it is because I have attempted to paint a verbal picture of the opening scene of Disney's *The Lion King*, and for those who are blind or visually impaired, video description is what brings a classic scene like this one to life.

Thanks to the *Twenty First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act (CVAA)*, the top four broadcast and top five non-broadcast networks have been mandated to provide 50 hours of video described programming per calendar quarter since 2011. This translates to approximately four hours per week of described programming on each of the covered networks.

With a universe of more than 900 cable channels, the average American is watching over 210 hours of video programming per month. For someone who is blind or visually impaired wishing to also be entertained by the small screen, however, this means that they are unable to enjoy many of the programs that could well become their favorites but for the fact that they are not covered with video description. We can and should do better, and thankfully the statute gives us that authority.

Given the unique benefits of video described programming for those who are blind or visually impaired, I have long supported increasing the availability of this feature. During last month's Disability Advisory Committee meeting, I called for Commission action to bring this proceeding to completion and, consistent with the CVAA, I am pleased that we are adopting an Order today to increase the availability of video described programming from 50 to 87.5 hour per calendar quarter among covered television networks. I believe this is an important step forward and will keep the door open to future Commission actions.

Independent of today's action, broadcast and cable networks have an opportunity to voluntarily do more than what is required. PBS is a shining example of a non-covered network that has proven to be a leader in providing video described programming to its viewers. A few of the commercial networks have also exceeded the amount of video description required by our rules. I would encourage other networks with the means to do so, to follow their lead. Actions like these represent one more step toward being a more inclusive society.

But the Commission should continue to "practice what it preaches." We can and should do more outreach to the blind and visually impaired community. This should include sharing information regarding instructions on how to access video described programming and how to find which programs offer this feature. Doing so will ensure that the benefits of video description reach those who would benefit the most.

Many thanks to the Media Bureau and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau staff for your commitment to the goals of the CVAA. We are helping to ensure that millions of Americans who are blind or visually impaired are more informed and better included in one of our nation's favorite pastimes.