

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Misuse of Internet Protocol (IP) Captioned Telephone Service*, CG Docket No. 13-24;
Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities, CG Docket No. 03-123

For the many Americans with hearing loss, IP CTS enables them to stay in touch with friends and family, call for help in an emergency, and otherwise communicate in ways that many of us take for granted. It does so by allowing callers with hearing loss to read, in real-time, captions that display the audio of their phone calls. It's a service that's funded through the FCC's telecommunications relay service program and, in most cases, it relies on operators that help to generate the captions.

I've had the chance to visit with these operators, including at a call center in Nevada. Many of them told me they were drawn to this line of work because of a family member with hearing loss and their desire to help other Americans that rely on the service to communicate.

Given the significant role IP CTS plays in the hearing loss community, it is incumbent on the FCC to ensure that program dollars are available for those who need it and that we stop any abuses in the system. And this Commission is taking steps in the right direction. Last June, for instance, we adopted several program reforms and sought comment on updating the IP CTS program. At the time, I urged the Commission to focus its efforts on two areas in particular: First, on preventing limited dollars from going towards calls for which the parties do not need captions; and second, on ensuring that IP CTS users have reliable access to 911 in an emergency.

With today's decision, we're taking action on both fronts. By requiring IP CTS providers to perform more stringent eligibility checks, we will better target support to individuals with hearing loss. And by simplifying the 911 call handling process, we enable more reliable emergency responses for those with hearing loss.

These are good steps and I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues, as well as IP CTS providers and members of the hearing loss community, to make sure we're doing all we can to make communications accessible for all Americans.

Thank you to the staff of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau for your work on this item. It has my support.