

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Structure and Practices of the Video Relay Service Program*, CG Docket No. 10-51;  
*Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities*, CG Docket No. 03-123

In 2010, Apple changed the world of modern wireless communications when it introduced FaceTime. But what's since become an enjoyable luxury for many of us—being able to see the person you're talking to on a screen—is a necessity for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or otherwise speech-disabled. For them, being able to communicate via sign language across a digital platform is a critical link to the outside world.

Today, the FCC is making that link stronger. Specifically, we're improving direct, unmediated, and private video communications between sign language users and customer support call centers, which are the recipients of a large amount of video relay service (VRS) traffic. By broadening the range of direct video customer support entities that may access the TRS Numbering Directory beyond those defined as "service providers," we will give those customer support call centers that choose to participate the opportunity to communicate more efficiently with their customers who rely on American Sign Language. Qualified entities would access the TRS Numbering Directory according to the same rules and obligations that govern VRS providers.

In this Order, we are also taking common-sense steps to curtail the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse in the VRS program. For example, we are prohibiting VRS providers from offering non-service-related inducements that are intended to entice consumers to sign up for or use a VRS provider's service. Non-service-related giveaways don't improve service quality and may encourage unnecessary use of the service.

But even with these steps, our work at improving VRS is not fully done. That's why we are proposing to make permanent the pilot program for at-home call handling, which allows VRS providers to handle some VRS calls from at-home workstations, subject to appropriate safeguards. The pilot program enabled providers to attract and retain qualified interpreters for whom working at the companies' call centers is not a practical option, which in turn expanded the available pool of qualified sign-language interpreters who can improve VRS reliability.

Of course, all that we are seeking to accomplish in this item would not be possible without the excellent work of a number of people within the Commission. A hearty thank you to the following: Bob Aldrich, Barbara Esbin, Eliot Greenwald, Michael Scott, and Karen Peltz Strauss (now retired) from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Andy Multz and David "Raster" Schmidt from the Office of Managing Director; Sharon Lee from the Enforcement Bureau; Terry Cavanaugh, Marcus Maher, Rick Mallen, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel; Eric Burger, Katherine LoPicca, Chuck Needy, and Emily Talaga from the Office of Economics and Analytics; and Belford Lawson from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.