

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN TOM WHEELER**

Re: *Closed Captioning of Internet Protocol-Delivered Video Programming: Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010; Closed Captioning of Internet Protocol-Delivered Video Clips*, MB Docket 11-154

The FCC is the representative of all Americans. I believe we have a special responsibility to fight for the interests of underserved communities, in particular Americans living with disabilities.

Americans living with intellectual and physical disabilities stand to benefit the most from broadband-enabled technologies, but are among the least connected segments of our society.

Our responsibility is two-fold: (1) to assure access for all to our communications networks, and (2) to open up the possibilities new technologies bring for dealing with various challenges facing the disability community.

Fulfilling these responsibilities has been one of the agency's highest priorities since I became Chairman, and I'm proud to say that this commitment is reflected in our actions.

On my very first day on the job at the FCC, I met with representatives of the disability community to talk about how we could attack these challenges together.

I met with a student from Gallaudet who told me the story of when her sister went into shock and she had to text her mother at work, pray her mom was watching her phone, so that her mom could call 911. In January, we proposed that all text messaging providers had to offer text-to-911 capabilities.

Last month, I joined some of the nation's leading innovators to recognize small businesses, large industries, app developers, government agencies, and public-private partnerships that are doing pioneering work in assistive technologies. At that same event, I announced the ASL Consumer Support Line at the FCC, a video service that will allow consumers to speak to the FCC using American Sign Language rather than filling out a form.

We've moved forward with a \$10 million trial program to support equipment to low-income individuals who are deaf-blind to access the phone network, advanced communications and the Internet so that they may gain new levels of independence, privacy and productivity.

And as today's item demonstrates, we've made significant progress on improving closed captioning.

Earlier this year, the Commission acted to enhance quality standards for closed captioning on TV that had been languishing at the FCC for over a decade.

As part of our implementation of the Communications and Video Accessibility Act, the Commission previously adopted closed captioning requirements for full-length video programming online. With today's item, we go further and require captioning for video clips that end up on the Internet.

Accessibility of programming must evolve with technology in order for us to maintain our commitment to universal access. When the number of U.S. households viewing TV programming exclusively on the Internet is poised to surpass the number viewing only via antenna, and 77% of Internet users regularly watch video clips online – often to get news, sports, and entertainment programming, it's time to update our closed captioning rules to reflect these changes.

Today's order does just that and will ensure millions of Americans who “hear with their eyes” have greater access to video information on the Internet.

Many members of the industry have already taken significant strides toward captioning online video clips, especially news clips, which I commend. I encourage these entities to continue captioning their IP-delivered video clips whenever possible, and to do so in a timely fashion so that individuals who are deaf or hard-of-hearing are able to access the same content available to the hearing population.

The Order we adopt today will ensure that this progress continues, and the reasonable compliance deadlines we impose will ensure that industry is able to meet the requirements.

I am also pleased that the Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks comment on additional issues for which future Commission action could provide additional benefit to this population.

In particular, it is my hope that the Commission will act quickly to address application of the IP closed captioning rules to video clips provided by third-party distributors, and to decrease or eliminate the grace period applicable to video clips of live programming. It is essential that people with disabilities not only get the same access as the rest of us, but that the access that they get is as timely and therefore as relevant, as what the rest of us get. Access delayed is often the same as access denied.

Therefore, until we resolve these issues, while the Further Notice is pending, I encourage members of the industry to caption IP-delivered video clips of live programming as quickly as possible, to best serve all consumers. I want to thank Commission staff of the Media Bureau and the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau for their fine and thoughtful work on this item.

Never has there been a greater opportunity to harness the power of communications technology to improve the lives of Americans living with disabilities. Since I became Chairman, we have acted aggressively to seize these opportunities. Today, we acted again. And we will continue to act in the future.