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**For Immediate Release**

**FCC ANNOUNCES \$34.6 MILLION CONSUMER PRIVACY INVESTIGATION SETTLEMENT WITH CAPTIONCALL INVOLVING SERVICES FOR CONSUMERS WITH DISABILITIES**

***Company Must Implement Comprehensive Privacy and Data Protection Program with Significant Financial Resources Dedicated to Improvements***

WASHINGTON, July 9, 2024—The FCC’s Enforcement Bureau today announced a settlement with CaptionCall, and its parent company, Sorenson Communications, to resolve an investigation into the company’s unlawful retention of call content beyond the duration of a call and submission of inaccurate information to the Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) Fund Administrator. To resolve the investigation, CaptionCall entered into a Consent Decree and agreed to a comprehensive compliance program, enhanced compliance reporting, and a financial settlement of nearly \$35 million—a \$4 million investment in privacy and data protection enhancements for TRS users, a \$5 million civil penalty, a \$12 million reimbursement to the TRS Fund, and relinquishment of over \$13.6 million in IP Captioned Telephone Service (IP CTS) reimbursement claims.

The Consent Decree’s expansive consumer privacy and data protection terms include requirements to:

- conduct a data inventory;
- implement a data retention schedule; and
- invest in measures such as privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) and educational resources for consumers.

TRS uses technology and/or communications assistants to enable millions of consumers in the United States who are deaf, hard of hearing, deafblind, or have speech disabilities to utilize the telecommunications system to make and receive calls. IP CTS is a form of this service that enables persons who are hard of hearing to use a device that displays captions during a call.

The Enforcement Bureau’s investigation found that CaptionCall unlawfully retained some call content of TRS users for three years before discovering the issue.

“We are deeply committed to ensuring that consumers with disabilities have the same assurances of privacy as any other consumer,” **said FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel**. “TRS providers have to take additional precautions given their unique access to the content of their customers’ calls, and we will continue our vigilance on this front to ensure those responsibilities are met.”

“The groundbreaking privacy and data protection terms contained in this consent decree reflect the need for communications services companies and the technologies they deploy to reflect an

inclusive approach to protecting everyone’s privacy and sensitive data,” **said Enforcement Bureau Chief Loyaan A. Egal, who also serves as Chair of the FCC’s Privacy and Data Protection Task Force.** “Today’s settlement highlights the Privacy and Data Protection Task Force’s holistic approach to identifying, assessing, and addressing privacy and data protection concerns for all consumers, including those with disabilities who rely on certain technologies to meet their communications needs.”

In 2023, FCC Chairwoman Rosenworcel established the Privacy and Data Protection Task Force, an FCC staff working group focused on coordinating across the agency on the rulemaking, enforcement, and public awareness needs in the privacy and data protection sectors, including data breaches (such as those involving telecommunications providers) and vulnerabilities in regulated communications providers’ privacy and cybersecurity practices. More information on the Task Force is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/privacy-and-data-protection-task-force>.

The Consent Decree is available at: <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-eb-settles-consumer-privacy-investigation-captioncall>

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*This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).*