

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER MIGNON CLYBURN

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 2013, the Commission took action to modernize and reform our Video Relay Service (VRS) program by adjusting the rates and making other programmatic changes that have benefited deaf, hard of hearing, deaf-blind, or consumers with speech disabilities who rely on this critical service to communicate with family, friends, and emergency personnel. I am pleased to support today's Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, which seeks comment on ways to further enhance the program for consumers while ensuring that we have constraints to guard against waste, fraud and abuse.

One aspect of the 2013 Order that has fallen a bit under the radar is the open platform initiative. I am excited to note that the initiative, known as Accessible Communications for Everyone (ACE), is scheduled for launch in mid-2016, with a beta version available in early 2016. Once implemented, ACE will be available to everyone as an app and should facilitate some of the proposals in the Further Notice. Moreover, the app could enhance competition among VRS providers by, for example, including an option to have the first available VRS provider answer the call. And, if the Commission decides to launch skills-based routing, the app will support this functionality as well. I look forward to the benefits of the ACE initiative being available to everyone and thank the Commission staff for their dedication to ensure that this vision becomes a reality.