

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JONATHAN S. ADELSTEIN**

Re: Telecommunications Relay Services and Speech-to-Speech Services for Individuals with Hearing and Speech Disabilities; Internet-based Captioned Telephone Service, CG Docket No. 03-123.

I am very pleased to support this *Declaratory Ruling* permitting IP captioned telephone service to be covered by the Interstate TRS fund. This decision clears the way for a new relay service that combines the benefits of two existing relay services, IP Relay and captioned telephone service, and allows our relay services to move more fully into the Internet Age.

I've heard from many individuals with hearing disabilities that captioned telephone services are highly valued because they facilitate a much more natural flow of conversation than that afforded by traditional relay services, and because they offer an important communications link for the many individuals who cannot take advantage of Video Relay Services because they are unable to use sign language. This new IP captioned telephone service will give these citizens even greater flexibility in terms of functionality and types of devices that they can use. The record here suggests that IP captioned telephone service is a great leap forward, and that it will be particularly beneficial in the employment environment and other situations where seamless, real-time communications are so valuable.

Our action today is another step toward ensuring that functionally equivalent services be made available to all Americans, which is the enduring standard of the ADA, and I would like to thank the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and the Disability Rights Office for their continued efforts in support of that goal.