

Proceeding: IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 255 OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT Record 1 of 1

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Dear Sirs:

I have the following comments on the subject proceeding:

1. I don't believe the Section 255 "broad objectives" are accomplished with range of services that this proposed FCC rule is limited to. Please consider a wider range of services. (paragraph 42)

2. I would urge the "readily achievable" requirements adopted be similar to those in the ADA Title III. As proposed, the effects of the economics jeopardize the access elements from being provided. Its clear market pressures alone have not worked to ensure access in the past.

Kim Blackseth

Applicant Name: Richard Radtke

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I am a fully employed quadriplegic and rely heavily on telecommunications. Telecommunications has already had a major impact on my ability and opportunity to learn, work, and participate in the community. Moreover, just as telecommunications is becoming increasingly important in the lives of Americans generally, so also is its significance in the lives of people with disabilities destined to grow.

If these services are not required to be accessible, I will continue to have fewer employment opportunities, and I will not be able to fully participate in today's society. I urge the FCC to cover "enhanced services," because coverage of these services is critical to full telecommunications access.

In addition:

- There should be no filing fees for informal or formal complaints with the FCC against either manufacturers or service providers. Waiving these fees would be in the public interest.
- There should not be any time limit for filing complaints, because one never knows when he or she will discover that a product or service is inaccessible.
- Consumers with disabilities should be able to submit complaints by any accessible means available.
- Manufacturers and service providers should be required to establish contact points in their companies that are accessible to consumers with disabilities.

Thanks for your support.

Richard Radtke

Applicant Name: Laura Remson Mitchell

Proceeding Name: 96-198 Author Name: Laura Remson Mitchell

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Re: FCC proposed rules for implementing "Access to Telecommunications Services, Telecommunications Equipment, and Customer Premises Equipment by Persons with Disabilities"

TO: FCC

I am writing to urge that you make the telecommunications access regulations as strong as possible.

I understand that your proposed regulations would, among other things, limit access requirements only to the most "basic" services, which would *not* necessarily include things like e-mail and future innovations that could prove very important to people with disabilities. Please recognize that telecommunications is a lifeline for many of us. Some would be completely isolated were it not for e-mail contact.

I myself have a disability (multiple sclerosis) that makes it difficult and/or expensive for me to get to certain places associated with the work I do. Thanks to telecommunications services and equipment (currently, a cordless telephone with a headset, a fax machine, e-mail and Internet access), I have been able to work by teleconferencing from a home office for about 10 years, earning income and paying taxes. Without access to this technology, that wouldn't have been possible.

At this point, my condition allows me to use the existing telecommunications system, but MS is a chronic, unpredictable and often progressive disease that can affect any part of the body at any time, either temporarily or permanently. If my symptoms change, and new technology exists to assure that I have continued access to the same telecommunications services as everyone else, I should be able to use it. That, certainly, would be in keeping with the spirit of the Americans with Disabilities Act. And that's what the regulations should assure.

As the telecommunications industry develops further, it is essential for those of us with disabilities to have equal access to the new technologies. Limiting accessibility requirements to only so-called basic services would betray that principle. On the other hand, continued access to the latest telecommunications technology will be important in allowing me and others like me to keep up with the changing world around us, including new job demands.

I know that cost may be a concern in establishing these regulations, but you need to recognize the high cost of *not* providing broad access to telecommunications as well--including but not limited to loss of the productivity and commercial activity that otherwise could be generated by people with disabilities.

I also urge you to stay as close as possible to the spirit and concepts incorporated into the Americans with Disabilities Act when you define terms like "readily achievable." Once again, it is important to remember that there is a high "opportunity cost" to *not* assuring access--both for the individual who is denied access and for our country.

Thank you for your consideration.

Laura Remson Mitchell

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0 People with disabilities: A resource to recognize,
|_ *not* a problem to solve! |

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*** (c) 1998, Laura Remson Mitchell e-mail: af752@lafn.org |

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