



# Learning Disabilities Association of America

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In the Matter of Implementation of Section 255 of the  
Telecommunication Act of 1998  
WT Dkt 98198

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June 25, 1998  
COMMENTS OF LDA, The Learning Disabilities Association of America

LDA, The Learning Disabilities Association of America submits these comments to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on its proposed Section 255 rules.

LDA is a national, non profit, volunteer organization including individuals with learning disabilities, their families, and professionals. LDA is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all individuals with learning disabilities and their families, to alleviating the restricting effects of learning disabilities, and to supporting endeavors to determine the causes of learning disabilities. LDA seeks to accomplish this through advocacy, education, research and service and through collaborative efforts.

LDA applauds the FCC for issuing proposed rules to supplement Section 255 of the Telecommunications Act of 1998. Increased access to telecommunications equipment is critical to expanding employment, educational, and recreational opportunities for individuals whose learning disabilities make it difficult, if not impossible to respond readily to a series of spoken instructions. LDA urges the FCC to adopt the following recommendations so that the needs of individuals with learning disabilities are fully considered in the design, development, and manufacture of telecommunications products and services.

LDA urges the FCC to adopt the Section 255 guidelines issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) on February 3, 1998. In addition to the guidelines on achieving accessibility, LDA urges the FCC to adopt and enforce the following guidelines for both service providers and equipment manufacturers.

\* Individuals with disabilities should be included in market research on products or services.

\* Individuals with disabilities should be included in design trials and product demonstrations.

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- \* Reasonable efforts should be made to validate access solutions through testing with individuals with disabilities.
- \* Manufacturers and service providers should be required to provide access to product and service information, including their accessibility features. To the extent that such information is made available to the general public, it should be made available in accessible formats or modes, upon request, at no extra charge.
- \* Substantial changes or upgrades to existing products should be made accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- \* Software, hardware, or firmware that are integral to telecommunications should be covered by the Section 255 rules.

LDA supports the FCC decision to require an assessment of accessibility and compatibility for each product.

LDA urges the FCC to include in its rules accessibility of advanced telecommunications technologies, such as voice mail, electronic mail, interactive telephone prompt systems, and interment telephony as well basic telephone services.

LDA recognizes the need to balance the costs of including an access feature in the overall financial resources of the covered entity. LDA opposes allowing consideration of the extent to which an accessible product can be marketed and the extent to which costs can be recovered . The only reason an accessibility law such as Section 255 was needed is because the market did not respond to the needs of people with disabilities

LDA supports many of the FCC proposals concerning consumer complains, but

- \* asks for clarification of the means available to seek redress under Section 255, and
- \* opposes the rule that would require consumers to first receive approval from the FCC before being permitted to bring a formal FCC complaint.

LDA thanks the FCC for the opportunity to submit these comments and urges the FCC to act promptly in issuing rules that will fully ensure telecommunications access by individuals with learning disabilities.

Respectfully submitted



Harrison Sylvester, President,  
LDA, Learning Disabilities Association of America