

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Transition from TTY to Real-Time Text Technology*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, CG Docket No. 16-145; *Petition for Rulemaking to Update the Commission's Rules for Access to Support the Transition from TTY to Real-Time Text Technology*, and *Petition for Waiver of Rules Requiring Support of TTY Technology*, GN Docket No. 15-178

Earlier this year, two University of Washington college students on a \$100 budget designed a pair of gloves. Now these gloves—still just a prototype—were about function, not fashion. Armed with wireless sensors, they can translate sign language into text and speech in real time. This is exciting stuff. It allows the deaf and speech disabled to communicate in sign language with those who do not sign. Earlier this month these students were awarded the Lemelson-MIT Student Prize to further develop their gloves—which currently recognize only a limited set of signs. But on a \$100 budget, hey, you can understand.

Think about this development—and then think about text telephone technology, or TTY. TTY is a relic. TTY was first widely deployed in the 1970's to help deaf, hard-of-hearing, and speech-disabled individuals send and receive person-to-person text over telephone lines. There was a time when it was revolutionary—but that date has long since past. The machines are bulky and cumbersome devices, with none of the sleek features of today's smartphones. Moreover, TTY is ill-suited for transmission over new IP networks. Technology is marching on—and gloves may even be leading the way. But no matter where we go, it is clear that it is time to move beyond TTY systems and embrace the future.

So today we adopt a rulemaking to improve text-to-text communications options for those who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind, and speech disabled. We seek comment on the possibilities of Real-Time Text. Real-Time Text offers immediate transmission of text and allows for both parties to type at once—a definite improvement over traditional TTY. Even better, this technology is generally available on off-the-shelf devices making larger market scale and more innovation more possible. So goodbye to 1970's-era TTY hardware—and hello to communications technology that reflects the digital age.

I look forward to the record that develops and thank both the carriers and the disabilities community who have pressed the case for Real-Time Text. Thank you also to the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Disability Rights Office for your willingness to embrace what is new and move disability access policies forward.