

OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
MAINE

154 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 224-5344

Web Site: <http://snowe.senate.gov>
DEPUTY WHIP

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

FISHERIES AND COAST GUARD
SUBCOMMITTEE

FINANCE

INTELLIGENCE

RANKING MEMBER, SMALL BUSINESS

May 25, 2010

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

813

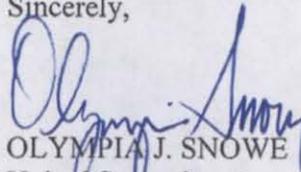
Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) considers proposed compensation rates for the Interstate Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) Fund submitted by the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA), I want to highlight the importance of the Video Relay Service (VRS) program as an indispensable communications tool for the deaf community. VRS allows people with hearing disabilities in Maine and across the country to communicate with voice telephone users through video equipment, rather than through typed text. With VRS, deaf Americans are able to place calls easily to family and friends, co-workers, their doctors, and even first responders.

On April 30th, the Commission announced, through a Public Notice, that it was seeking comment on whether it should adopt NECA's proposed rates for the 2010-2011 Fund year. In the FCC's evaluation and adoption of a rate structure, I urge the FCC to strike the proper balance between ensuring the continue health and viability of the program and improving the overall integrity of this valuable service. The significant fraud that allegedly occurred recently in the VRS program is deeply disconcerting and warrants applying the appropriate safeguards to protect the program from being a victim of future fraud and abuse. I appreciate the FCC reaffirming its strong commitment to the program and desire to ensure that its users will be able to continue to receive the significant benefits it provides.

Utilizing fact-based analysis and the public comment the Commission receives, I am confident you will adopt a fair and certain rate and implement more effective management and oversight that will guarantee the continued integrity of this essential communications service for deaf Americans. I look forward to working with the Commission, NECA, VRS providers, and the deaf community to achieve that goal.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator

AUBURN
TWO GREAT FALLE PLAZA
SUITE 7B
AUBURN, ME 04210
(207) 786-2451

AUGUSTA
40 WESTERN AVENUE, SUITE 408C
AUGUSTA, ME 04330
(207) 622-8292

BANGOR
ONE CUMBERLAND PLACE, SUITE 306
BANGOR, ME 04401
(207) 945-0432

BIDDEFORD
227 MAIN STREET
BIDDEFORD, ME 04005
(207) 282-4144

PORTLAND
3 CANAL PLAZA, SUITE 601
PORTLAND, ME 04101
(207) 874-0883
MAINE RELAY SERVICE
TDD 1-955-3323

PRESQUE ISLE
169 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 3
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769
(207) 764-5124

IN MAINE CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-432-1599

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER