

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Office of Public Affairs
PHONE:202-418-0500
FAX:202-418-2825

DATE: May 2, 1996

TO: Diana Fortuna, Domestic Policy Council

FROM: Susan Lewis Sallet, 418-0505

NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: C +3

COMMENTS:

Diana,

I wanted to resend this information regarding the FCC's proposed Access 2000 conference to mark the sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

I will call your office later today to follow up. I'd appreciate any feedback you have as to whether this is of interest to you. If you have any questions in the meantime, you can reach me at 418-0505.

Thank you

Access 2000

Tentative Schedule

July 26, 1996

- 9 :30 a.m. President Clinton introduced by FCC Chairman Reed Hundt
- President Clinton speaks and departs at his convenience
- 10:00 a.m. Chairman Hundt speaks
- 10:30 a.m. Opening statements from ten key delegates (framing the issues, forging the partnerships, challenging the industry)
- 11:15 a.m. Panel discussion I: Section 255 Overview
- 12:00 p.m. Break
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch and celebrity keynote address
- 1:30 p.m. Panel discussion II: Closed Captioning and Video Description
- 2:15 p.m. Panel discussion III: Equipment Accessibility and Access Board Guidelines
- 3:00 p.m. Panel discussion IV: Services Accessibility
- 3:45 p.m. Technologies in the Year 2000 and Beyond
- 4:15 p.m. Wrap-up

Telecomm Access 2000 Proposal

- Event:** Access 2000 is a large-scale, open, day-long assembly of hundreds of delegates representing the many constituencies nationwide who are committed to the successful implementation of the disabilities access-related provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Celebrities, policymakers, and the media will also attend.
- Objective:** To bring together interested parties to articulate the need for a modern vision of universal access by all consumers, including people with disabilities, to advanced telecommunications equipment and services. Access 2000 will facilitate implementation of the disabilities access-related provisions of the Act by building partnerships between the diverse groups represented and creating a forum for discussion of these issues. The event will further the Administration's goals of greater accessibility to communications for all Americans, and it will also help the government serve the people better by replacing protracted paper proceedings with an open discussion of the issues, leading to consensus-driven rules.
- Speakers:** President Clinton, FCC Chairman Reed Hundt, and Small Business Administrator Philip Lader will be invited to speak.
- Celebrities:** Marlee Matalin, Miss America 1995 Heather Whitestone, Ray Charles, Jose Feliciano, and Howie Seago from Star Trek will be among those invited to appear.
- Participants:** Delegates will represent disability groups, consumer organizations, the small business community, the telecommunications industry, government, and universities from across the country, where the event will be carried live via satellite. Access 2000 will also be carried in some capacity on the Internet.
- Organizers:** The FCC, White House, Small Business Administration, and others as appropriate.
- Date:** July 26, 1996 (the sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Location:** Department of Commerce auditorium, Washington, D.C., or Natcher Auditorium, Bethesda, MD.

— More guidance / where going if Principal thereof associated
hard if unpredictable

— Concrete examples

Background:

To fulfill its duties under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) must undertake approximately 80 rulemaking proceedings this year. In keeping with the goals of the Administration, the FCC aims to craft fair rules, in the most efficient manner possible, that promote competition while protecting the public interest in the telecommunications revolution.

As part of this process, the FCC will implement two landmark provisions of the Act that will affect persons with disabilities. Section 255 of the Act requires that manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and providers of telecommunications services ensure that such equipment and services are designed and developed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. Section 713 of the Act aims to ensure that video services are accessible to individuals with hearing and/or visual disabilities through the use of closed captioning and video description (in which the visual components of programming are made accessible through audio description).

FCC rulemaking proceedings are generally initiated with issuance of either a Notice of Inquiry (NOI), which is designed to gather facts from the public and industry on an issue, or a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), which details proposed changes to FCC rules and seeks public comment. Interested parties file their responses with the FCC in the form of written comments. Those comments are reviewed and considered by the Commission before final rules are adopted through a Report and Order.

Access 2000 will enhance the aforementioned rulemakings by offering a forum for open discussion of the questions and proposals under debate by the FCC in implementing the disabilities access-related provisions of the Act. Specifically, the major policy considerations will be explored in a series of panel discussions. Participation in the rulemaking process, therefore, will be broadened to include parties who have the most at stake and the least resources to put their interest in the record.

Media coverage of the event will heighten awareness of these issues and encourage participation from Americans "outside the Beltway."

VP/
NPR

what all they

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Office of Public Affairs

PHONE:202-418-0500

FAX:202-418-2825

DATE: March 5, 1996

TO: Diana Fortuna, Domestic Policy Council

FROM: Susan Lewis Sallet, 202/418-0505

NO. OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: C +3

COMMENTS:

I'm sorry this took us so long but we wanted to ensure that our current proposal for Access 2000 accurately reflected and fully encompassed the Commission's responsibilities under the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The draft schedule attached represents an ideal world scenario and we would, of course, be happy to work with you on any necessary modifications.

Thank you

Access 2000 Proposal

- Event:** Access 2000 is a large-scale, open, day-long assembly of hundreds of delegates representing the many constituencies nationwide who are committed to the successful implementation of the disabilities access-related provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Celebrities, policymakers, and the media will also attend.
- Objective:** To bring together interested parties to articulate the need for a modern vision of universal access by all consumers, including people with disabilities, to advanced telecommunications equipment and services. Access 2000 will facilitate implementation of the disabilities access-related provisions of the Act by building partnerships between the diverse groups represented and creating a forum for discussion of these issues. The event will further the Administration's goals of greater accessibility to communications for all Americans, and it will also help the government serve the people better by replacing protracted paper proceedings with an open discussion of the issues, leading to consensus-driven rules.
- Speakers:** President Clinton, FCC Chairman Reed Hundt, and Small Business Administrator Philip Lader will be invited to speak.
- Celebrities:** Marlee Matalin, Miss America 1995 Heather Whitestone, Ray Charles, Jose Feliciano, and Howie Seago from Star Trek will be among those invited to appear.
- Participants:** Delegates will represent disability groups, consumer organizations, the small business community, the telecommunications industry, government, and universities from across the country, where the event will be carried live via satellite. Access 2000 will also be carried in some capacity on the Internet.
- Organizers:** The FCC, White House, Small Business Administration, and others as appropriate.
- Date:** July 26, 1996 (the sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act)
- Location:** Department of Commerce auditorium, Washington, D.C., or Natcher Auditorium, Bethesda, MD.

Access 2000

Tentative Schedule

July 26, 1996

- 9 :30 a.m. President Clinton introduced by FCC Chairman Reed Hundt
- President Clinton speaks and departs at his convenience
- 10:00 a.m. Chairman Hundt speaks
- 10:30 a.m. Opening statements from ten key delegates (framing the issues, forging the partnerships, challenging the industry)
- 11:15 a.m. Panel discussion I: Section 255 Overview
- 12:00 p.m. Break
- 12:30 p.m. Lunch and celebrity keynote address
- 1:30 p.m. Panel discussion II: Closed Captioning and Video Description
- 2:15 p.m. Panel discussion III: Equipment Accessibility and Access Board Guidelines
- 3:00 p.m. Panel discussion IV: Services Accessibility
- 3:45 p.m. Technologies in the Year 2000 and Beyond
- 4:15 p.m. Wrap-up

Background:

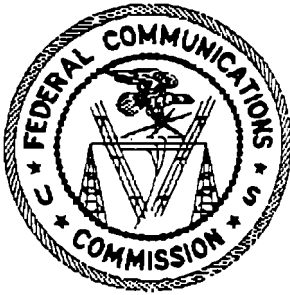
To fulfill its duties under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) must undertake approximately 80 rulemaking proceedings this year. In keeping with the goals of the Administration, the FCC aims to craft fair rules, in the most efficient manner possible, that promote competition while protecting the public interest in the telecommunications revolution.

As part of this process, the FCC will implement two landmark provisions of the Act that will affect persons with disabilities. Section 255 of the Act requires that manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and providers of telecommunications services ensure that such equipment and services are designed and developed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. Section 713 of the Act aims to ensure that video services are accessible to individuals with hearing and/or visual disabilities through the use of closed captioning and video description (in which the visual components of programming are made accessible through audio description).

FCC rulemaking proceedings are generally initiated with issuance of either a Notice of Inquiry (NOI), which is designed to gather facts from the public and industry on an issue, or a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM), which details proposed changes to FCC rules and seeks public comment. Interested parties file their responses with the FCC in the form of written comments. Those comments are reviewed and considered by the Commission before final rules are adopted through a Report and Order.

Access 2000 will enhance the aforementioned rulemakings by offering a forum for open discussion of the questions and proposals under debate by the FCC in implementing the disabilities access-related provisions of the Act. Specifically, the major policy considerations will be explored in a series of panel discussions. Participation in the rulemaking process, therefore, will be broadened to include parties who have the most at stake and the least resources to put their interest in the record.

Media coverage of the event will heighten awareness of these issues and encourage participation from Americans "outside the Beltway."



FAX 2 pages to follow.....

**FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C.
COMMON CARRIER BUREAU
DOMESTIC FACILITIES DIVISION**

Room 6327, 2025 M Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20554

DATE: NOV 2, 1995

TO: DIANA FORTUNA

PHONE:

FIRM:

FAX: 202-456-7028

FROM: Linda Dubroof
Deputy Division Chief

PHONE: (202) 418-2335

Director, Disabilities Issues Task Force

FAX: (202) 418-2345

HARD COPY TO FOLLOW.



Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

November 2, 1995

Diana Fortuna
Senior Policy Analyst
Office of Domestic Policy
White House
Old Executive Office Building
Room 213
Washington, D.C. 20500

*Susan Sallat
New head of leg Affairs
Rochelle's boss
- will try to focus
Summer*

Dear Diana:

It was a pleasure meeting with you and Debbie Fine last Friday to discuss disability access issues. It is apparent from the meeting that we share mutual goals in this area. I look forward to a continuing dialogue and productive partnership.

As we discussed, the Federal Communications Commission's Disabilities Issues Task Force, of which Chairman Reed Hundt is the designated Commissioner in charge and I am the Director, is planning an event called "Telecom Access 2000." It is our hope that the President could attend. I am enclosing our working proposal with the hope that you will provide us with your thoughts and recommendations to make this event a great success. Your input is critical during this preliminary stage. Rochelle Cohen from our Office of Public Affairs is chairing the Working Group that is planning this event. Please feel free to forward any suggestions or questions you may have on "Telecom Access 2000" to Rochelle at (202) 418-0253 (phone) or (202) 418-2809 (fax) or rcohen@fcc.gov (e-mail).

On another matter, thank you for inviting me to address your Roundtable. I would be honored to participate. Please let me know when you are planning your next meeting. I can be reached at (202) 418-2335 or you may contact my assistant Sheryl Todd at (202) 418-2313.

Again, I enjoyed our meeting and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Linda

Linda B. Dubroff
Director, Disabilities Issues Task Force

*Mon 3/4 am OK
Tues No
Wed > 1 OK
Thurs No
Fri 3/8*

cc: Chairman Reed Hundt
Ruth Milkman
Karen Watson
Rochelle Cohen
Brian Browdie
Debbie Fine

*gone next wk
last wk in Feb - tough
Mar 7 - Award blind*

Proposal for Telecom Access 2000

dem can't / ado

Summary of Event: The Federal Communications Commission is coordinating an event, tentatively titled Telecom Access 2000, to promote access to telecommunications for people with disabilities. The event is planned for early next year in Washington, D.C. The FCC would like to invite the President to spearhead the event, which we believe will complement the Administration's efforts to create more jobs, reduce dependence on government assistance, and promote technological literacy.

Not really

Format of the Event: Telecom Access 2000 will be a brief ceremony to unveil national goals designed to challenge the disability community, industry, and government to advance telecommunications access. In the months prior to the event, the FCC will convene meetings between representatives from industry and disability groups to formulate the goals, and Telecom Access 2000 will be the culmination of that effort. The intent will be to develop measurable goals that can be implemented by the widest range of service providers and manufacturers. Industry representatives who endorse the goals will encourage others to do the same. The event may also recognize pro-access private sector initiatives and showcase accessible technology through hands-on demonstrations.

meet what msg will be

contact

Bkgd

Purpose of Telecom Access 2000: Telecom Access 2000 will address the challenge of furthering the availability of telecommunications equipment and services to people with disabilities as the U.S. economy becomes more information- and communications-based. Access to telecommunications for people with disabilities creates more economic, social, and cultural opportunities for the 49 million Americans with disabilities. That mission is critical as our nation prepares for a new century and faces the demands of an increasingly global marketplace. Telecom Access 2000 will create a national forum to highlight the importance of the efforts of the disability community, telecommunications industry, and government leadership to address those issues. The event will emphasize the challenge of promoting the availability of telecommunications equipment and services to people with disabilities at this time when the foundation for participation in the information economy is being laid.

all same

say

Invitees: We would like to invite Cabinet officials for whom this event would have particular relevance (e.g., Secretaries of Labor, Education, HHS, HUD). Members of Congress, telecommunications industry leaders, citizens with disabilities, small business representatives, and celebrities having a particular interest in this issue (e.g., Heather Whitestone and Marlee Matlin).

Media Coverage: Mainstream, trade, and disability press.

who? guess

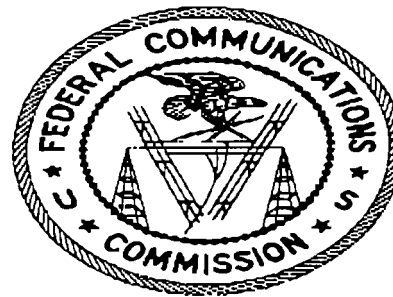
past a liam, fr

**FEDERAL
COMMUNICATIONS
COMMISSION**

Office of Public Affairs

(202) 418-0500

(202) 418-2809 fax



DATE Oct 11

TO: Diana Fortuna

FROM: Rochelle When

Please see the attached information
about the FCC's disability task force.

Page: 1 of 5 pages



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
1919 - M Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News media Information 202 / 418-0500
Recorded listing of release and texts
202 / 418-2222

546LL

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 585 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

June 28, 1995

CHAIRMAN HUNDT REAFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION OF THOSE WITH DISABILITIES IN INFORMATION REVOLUTION

"We have no higher responsibility and no greater opportunity than our duty to make sure that people with disabilities are able to share in the communications revolution," FCC Chairman Reed E. Hundt said today.

Hundt's remarks were in a speech prepared for delivery to the Eleventh International Telecommunications for the Deaf Incorporated Convention at Cambridge, MA.

Hundt also:

- praised the FCC Advisory Committee on Hearing Aid Compatibility for its quick action on reaching a consensus on proposed rules for wireline telephone hearing aid compatibility and volume control;
- said the FCC would soon begin a rulemaking proceeding to gather public comment and consider adopting such rules; and
- listed ten goals "for making equal access a reality."

Chairman Hundt said that the advisory committee "proposed a new set of rules that would dramatically increase access by persons with hearing disabilities to telephones, while at the same time avoiding unnecessary costs to business, industry and government." He also said "the recommended rules propose that all wireline telephones in the workplace, in confined settings (such as hospitals and nursing homes), and in hotels and motels eventually be hearing aid compatible. And the committee proposed that the Commission explore the possibilities of these telephones having volume controls."

He noted that he has formed a disabilities issues task force, with representatives from every FCC office and bureau "to tie together FCC initiatives in this area."

He said his goals for the future included a "top ten" wish list of things the FCC could do, under existing statutes, to make equal access a reality. He said, "I frankly don't know if all these things are possible; but with your help I suggest we find out."

(over)

by march!!

The ten are:

- Hold an "Access 2000" summit with persons with disabilities, industry, and government rulemakers to develop an agenda for action for the next 5 years;
- Ensure that all televised Commission meetings and publicly-sponsored Commission events are closed-captioned, and provide all Commission publications over the Internet so they can be downloaded in alternative formats, such as braille, enlarged text, and audio text;
- Require permanent labeling on all hearing aid compatible communications equipment;
- Review all the Commission's rules to ensure that advances in network services are accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities;
- Assign N11 codes for TRS access;
- Assign permanent, exclusive frequencies for assistive listening devices;
- Require volume control on all telephones;
- Expand mandatory minimum TRS program standards by: (a) requiring CAs (communication assistants) to relay in specifically requested foreign languages, (b) requiring TTY and Telebraille equipment distribution programs, (c) requiring operator services to access TTY numbers, and (d) requiring audiotext capability;
- Ensure that cellular and PCS equipment are hearing aid compatible, and
- Require closed captioning for all television and cable programming.

- FCC -

Info Superhighway
TDL -

NPR
Appointees →

Access 2000

RVP/2nd L

bring waves
Guest - celeb.

Commerce Dept. accessible
JP involvement

→ Extra FCC groups
ADA: DOT: Bob Mather
Leech assistance

Nat'l TF on Disab
US Cons - Jaramila
OCA
Transcends admin
AARP - membership open



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
1919 - M Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News media Information 202 / 418-0500
Recorded listing of release and texts
202 / 418-2222

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 516 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

July 26, 1995

LINDA DUBROOF NAMED DIRECTOR OF FCC'S DISABILITIES ISSUES TASK FORCE

Chairman Reed E. Hundt announced today the appointment of Linda Dubroof, Deputy Chief of the Common Carrier Bureau's Domestic Facilities Division, as the Director of the FCC's Disabilities Issues Task Force. He said, "As director, Linda will bring the same vigor to disabilities issues in all areas of telecommunications that she brings to telephone issues." Hundt said, "The Task Force is one of the FCC's most important tools in ensuring that our country does not become a nation of information haves and have-nots as we enter the next century."

Linda has been working on issues affecting people with hearing and speech disabilities for five years. She recently received an award from the Telecommunications for the Deaf, Inc., for her work in establishing nationwide TRS.

Chairman Hundt made the announcement at an event kicking-off an FCC campaign to increase public awareness of Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). TRS permit persons with hearing and speech disabilities who use text telephones to communicate with persons using regular telephones and vice versa.

The Disabilities Issues Task Force is made up of employees from all of the FCC's operating bureaus and offices. Chairman Hundt is the "Disabilities Issues Commissioner" and oversees the Task Force's work.

The Task Force was established last March to monitor developments in all fields regulated by the FCC, ensuring that new technologies are available to the broadest range of Americans, including the millions of people with disabilities.

Linda Dubroof can be reached via the internet at ldubroof@fcc.gov.

- FCC -



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
1919 - M Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20554

News media information 202 / 418-0500
Recorded listing of release and texts
202 / 418-2222

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

March 17, 1995

FCC ANNOUNCES ESTABLISHMENT OF DISABILITIES ISSUES TASK FORCE

FCC Chairman Reed E. Hundt has announced the establishment at the Commission of a Disabilities Issues Task Force to ensure that the interests of people with disabilities are represented and understood at the Commission and in the industries it regulates.

The task force is composed of one person from each Bureau and Office. It reports directly to the Disabilities Commissioner. Chairman Hundt has named himself to serve as the first Disabilities Commissioner. He pledged to "bring the full power of the Chairman's Office to bear on this project."

The Task Force will serve as a monitor and educator, ensuring that Commission and industry actions are in the best interests of the disability community and that they understand the needs and interests of the people with disabilities.

The composition of the Task Force, which brings together individuals from all over the Commission, will ensure a vigorous exchange of information from the disability community to the Bureaus and vice versa.

- FCC -



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

Diane,

These two documents are working documents.

I also sent you a brief summary
of the 1996 Telecom Act relating to people
with disabilities from our Annual Report.

Linda, David and I are on for
Friday May 17 at 4:15.

Thanks!

Pam Gregory

DRAFT**DRAFT****DRAFT****TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACCESS 2000****Tentative Schedule****July 26, 1996**FCC
Greg Simon

AWD

Cansel

Mix of scheduling

9:30am President Clinton introduced by FCC Chairman Reed Hundt. President Clinton speaks on the importance of access to telecommunications by people with disabilities for the 21st century, and technological marvels that already are available that are being demonstrated. and departs at his convenience

10:00am Chairman Hundt begins demonstrations of technologies which facilitate access to telecommunications by people with disabilities

Examples of technologies to be demonstrated

10:15 EyeGaze System (to be demonstrated by a celebrity such as Christopher Reeve or Mike Utley). This technology allows people with disabilities to operate a computer or Internet by eye-sight control. This is a very sophisticated system where a camera reads where the eye is gazing, so the eye can act as a "mouse" and press keys. Also, we possibly can have a celebrity link up with a child who has quadraplegia via a classroom hookup.

10:40 Reading Edge along with Voice Recognition (to be demonstrated by a celebrity such as Stevie Wonder). The ReadingEdge machine allows a person who is blind to place a document onto a scanner, and then a computer synthesized voice will read the document aloud. The Voice Recognition technology allows for a person to speak and then the software will convert the spoken language into written text on the computer monitor.

11:00 Video Relay Interpreting (to be demonstrated by a celebrity such as Marlee Matlin or Howie Seago from Star Trek). This new technology allows for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing to communicate on the voice telephone network through a sign language interpreter, viewed on a monitor. This technology takes advantage of PC capabilities and ISDN lines to improve the "functional equivalence" of relay services (Title IV of the ADA).

11:15 Closing remarks by Chairman Hundt

Title IV ADA
next frontierJune 18
David Fiske, PA
418. 0513

Access Bd.

must provide accessible
technologies, if readily
achievable

DRAFT

DRAFT

DRAFT

Telecommunications Access 2000

Event: Telecommunications Access 2000 is a large scale forum for demonstrations of three cutting edge technologies that act as the ramps to the Information Superhighway. Celebrities and the media will also attend.

Objective: This is a celebration of accessible technologies which facilitate access to telecommunications by people with disabilities

Speakers: President Clinton, Vice President Gore, FCC Chairman Reed Hundt, Bill Gates

Celebrities: Christopher Reeve, Stevie Wonder, Mike Utle, Dennis Byrd, Steven Hawking, Curtis Pride, George Shearing, Ray Charles, Howie Seago, Miss America 1996, Travis Roy, Marlee Matlin will be among those invited to appear

Participants: Representatives from the telecommunications industry, disability groups, government, consumers, manufacturers of accessible technologies, universities from across the country, where the event will be carried live via satellite. Telecommunication Access 2000 will also be carried in some capacity on the Internet.

Date: July 26, 1996 (the sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act).

Location: This event needs to be held indoors because of the technical equipment. Possibilities for event include: Department of Commerce auditorium, Washington, D.C., and Natcher Auditorium, Bethesda, MD

BACKGROUND

The FCC Disabilities Issues Task Force (DITF) was created in March 1995 by FCC Chairman Reed Hundt. The DITF is an internal, FCC-wide Task Force with representatives from every Bureau and Office. The DITF is dedicated to ensuring that people with disabilities, to the greatest extent possible, will be able to access telecommunications equipment and services in the Information Age.

The DITF has many roles:

- it serves as a single point of coordination and communication for all disability-related issues, in all areas of telecommunications regulated by the Commission;
- it advises the Chairman, Commissioners and other FCC officials on disability access issues;
- it educates FCC staff about the need to include disability access, wherever possible, in all Commission initiatives; and
- it works with Bureau and Office staff on rulemakings and in identifying the potential impact of proposed rules on people with disabilities.

In its first year of operation, however, the DITF found that its most important role was as a "bridge-builder" between the telecommunications industry and people with disabilities. The DITF reached out to both industry and consumers, and sought to bring former adversaries into forums where disputes could be resolved without the need for extended rulemakings. This proactive, consensus-oriented approach is highly effective in today's fast-paced and competitive telecommunications environment. This approach also has significant long-term benefits, because it provides consumers with disabilities and the industry with the opportunity to form strategic alliances.

THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ACT OF 1996

On February 8, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-104 (1996 Act). This legislation represents the most sweeping overhaul of American telecommunications law since the Communications Act of 1934.

In the 1996 Act, Congress reaffirmed the goals and purpose of the Disabilities Issues Task Force, and gave the Commission several specific mandates designed to enhance accessibility of the information infrastructure to Americans with disabilities.

Section 255 of the 1996 Act requires all manufacturers of telecommunications equipment and customer premises equipment (CPE) to ensure that their equipment is designed to be accessible to individuals with disabilities, if readily achievable. Section 255 also requires

providers of telecommunications services to ensure that their services are accessible to and usable by people with disabilities, if readily achievable. Manufacturers and service providers are also required to ensure that their equipment and services are compatible with peripheral devices commonly used by people with disabilities (i.e., TTYs and screen readers), if direct access is not readily achievable.

The 1996 Act also contains a historic mandate requiring providers of video programming to ensure that their programming is accessible to people with hearing and vision disabilities. Section 713 of the Act requires the Commission to report to Congress on the current availability of closed-captioned video programming, and to develop regulations promoting closed-captioning within 18 months of enactment of the 1996 Act. The Commission is also directed to conduct a study on the use of video description services for people with visual disabilities.

The DITF has taken a lead role in implementing the disability access sections of the 1996 Act. The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau (WTB) has primary responsibility for the implementation of Section 255, and WTB staffers have been working closely with DITF members and staff from the Common Carrier Bureau and the Office of Engineering and Technology. The Commission will be coordinating its efforts with those of the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) in developing equipment accessibility regulations, and the Commission will also initiate proceedings on accessible equipment and services in the summer of 1996.

The Cable Services and Mass Media Bureaus have also worked closely with the DITF as they implement the video programming requirements of the 1996 Act. In fact, in anticipation of the new video programming requirements, the DITF coordinated, with the Mass Media Bureau, the release of a historic Notice of Inquiry on closed-captioning and video description in December 1995. This Notice of Inquiry has now become the basis of the Commission's implementation of Section 713.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW: MARCH 1995 - APRIL 1996

Disabilities Issues Task Force launched, March 1995

In March 1995, Chairman Hundt officially established the Disabilities Issues Task Force, and named himself to serve as Disabilities Issues Commissioner. Speaking before the American Foundation for the Blind in Washington, D.C., Chairman Hundt remarked:

The Task Force will serve as a monitor and educator, ensuring that the interests and needs of the disability community are represented at the Commission and in industry. It will ensure a vigorous exchange of information from the disability community to the Bureaus, and vice versa. Working together, we can ensure that everyone has access to the information highway.



U.S. EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20507

FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION COVER SHEET

for

OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER PAUL STEVEN MILLER

Office of
the Commissioner

DATE:

9/11/95

NUMBER OF PAGES:
(Including Cover)

2

TO:

Ms. Diana Fortuna

OFFICE/COMPANY/FIRM: _____

TELEPHONE NO.: ()

456-5570

FACSIMILE NO.: ()

456-7028

FROM:

Paul Miller

CONTACT PERSON: _____

TELEPHONE NO.: (202) 663-

4036

FACSIMILE NO.: (202) 663-

7101

COMMENTS/SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: _____

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE

This communication is intended for the sole use of the person(s) to whom it is addressed and may contain information that is privileged, confidential and exempt for disclosure.

Any dissemination, distribution or copying of this communication by anyone other than the intended recipient or the person(s) responsible for its delivery is strictly prohibited.

If you have received this communication in error, please telephone this office immediately (if necessary, call collect) at (202) 663-4036 and either destroy the communication or return it to the address above.



SELF HELP FOR HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE, INC.
7910 Woodmont Avenue, Suite 1200
BETHESDA, MARYLAND 20814
(301) 837-2248 (V) 2249 (TT)
(301) 813-0413 FAX

FCC

SHHH POSITION ON CELLULAR ANALOG TELEPHONES

1. There are at least 5 million Americans who wear hearing aids. To participate fully in society, they need access to telecommunications just like everyone else.
2. Hearing aid wearers can use wireline and wireless telephones if they are hearing aid compatible.
3. The technology to make cellular analog phones hearing aid compatible according to FCC regulation Part 68 exists today.
4. But according to FCC regulations, wireless telephones are exempt from the requirements of the Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988.
5. To date we know of only two companies who have voluntarily designed some of their models to include built-in hearing aid compatibility.
5. Industry, on the whole, has resisted making their phones hearing aid compatible and in some cases have made statements that they have no plans to include compatibility in the future.
6. In a trial of cellular phones at the Cellular Telecommunications Industries Association (CTIA) seven hearing aid users, members of Self Help for Hard of Hearing People, (SHHH) Inc., tried out 8 different cellular phones. Of the eight, only three had built-in hearing aid compatibility. The rest had to be used with a hard-wired device to make them compatible which would be at a cost to the consumer in addition to the price of the telephone.
7. Wireless telephones are going to be the future of telecommunications in this country and the world. Anyone who does not have access to these devices will be seriously disadvantaged in all areas of daily life and particularly in the area of employment.
8. SHHH's position is that the FCC should change their regulations so that wireless telephones are covered by the Hearing Aid Compatibility Act of 1988. Manufacturers of wireless telephones should build in compatibility at the design stage so that consumers will not have to buy an add-on device in order to use the telephone, which is a retrofit after the fact.

11 September, 1995

Contact: Brenda Battal 301-657-2248