STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL

Re: *Implementation of the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010, Section 105, Relay Services for Deaf-Blind Individuals*, CG Docket No. 10-210.

Last week we celebrated the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This landmark civil rights legislation pried open the doors of opportunity for more than 56 million Americans, making it more possible for them to participate in civic and commercial life free from discrimination. Nearly six years ago, the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act was signed into law—bringing these same values into the digital age.

Pursuant to this law, four years ago, we launched the National Deaf-Blind Equipment Distribution pilot program to assist individuals who are deaf-blind with access to telephone and Internet services. Today, we make adjustments to this program to improve it—and we make it permanent.

This bodes well for the future of accessibility. Already in the short time that this program has been in place over three thousand people have been able to benefit from its support and lead lives that are more productive, more connected, and more independent. The stories from those who have used this program are downright inspiring. We have heard how a grandmother in Alabama has used this program to stay in touch with her nine grandchildren. We have heard how a 10-year-old girl in New Jersey has used this program to communicate with her teacher and classmates in ways that were never possible before. We have heard how a father in Arizona has trained for a new career as a rehabilitation counselor after decades of working as a tour boat pilot and repairman—a job he had to give up due to his hearing and vision loss.

This is powerful stuff. But there is more good to do, more doors to pry open, and more opportunity we can offer though this program. Thank you to the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau and Disability Rights Office for putting in the work to make this possible.