

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Transition from TTY to Real-Time Text Technology*, 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, Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

The digital world is fast becoming a more accessible and inclusive place. Already we have augmented reality tools that help blind travelers navigate physical reality. We have applications with screen reading functionality that enables the blind to read printed documents and signage. In the not too distant future, we will have gloves with wireless sensors that can translate sign language into text and speech in real time. This is exciting—and life-altering—stuff.

Now back to the present. Somehow, someday, text telephony technology, or TTY, is still a prominent feature of our access policies. But let's be honest: it's 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 passed. The machines lack the slim functionality and sleek features of today's smartphones. They are bulky and cumbersome and ill-suited for transmission over modern IP networks. They belong under glass—in a museum dedicated to analog antiquity.

Today we take a step in that direction by updating our rules to allow the deployment of Real-Time Text in place of TTY over wireless IP-enabled networks. This is a step toward the future. That's because Real-Time Text enables character by character text transmission without the need for specialized hardware. For those who choose to move forward, we require Real-Time Text to be interoperable across networks and devices as well as backward-compatible with TTY systems. Real-Time Text will also need to support 911 communications and simultaneous voice and text features. I hope in time Real-Time Text is universally available as a native function. But for now, transition to this technology will transition our accessibility policies to the future. And that's something we should all support.