

Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street Sw, tw-a325
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: comments of notice of proposed rulemaking in the matter of video description of video programming
mm docket no. 99-339

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the above-entitled matter.

I have ongoing contact with a large number of people who are blind. I am myself blind. We are all very active in our communities working hard to improve opportunities for others who are blind. We work hard on issues which we believe to be most important. The topic addressed in the proposed rule, description of video programming, simply has not been a significant enough matter to capture our attention.

I feel very strongly that the proposed rule related to video description does not address the real problem blind people experience in watching television. While described programming can be enjoyable and sometimes helpful, it should not be required or mandated but done on a voluntary basis by network tv or local tv channels. Entertainment material need not be described in order for blind people to enjoy it. What you propose in this rule is simply not a priority with most of the blind people I know.

The proposed rule does not resolve the major problem we have in accessing unspoken weather and news information flashed in writing on the tv screen. This is a far more serious need blind people have. Therefore, the proposed rule totally misses the very serious problem of information access. Not being informed of weather forecasts (provided in information which crawls across the screen and is never verbalized) can be very dangerous.

Blind people need access to information, not description of entertainment-type tv shows. The rule you propose gives blind people the dessert--the luxury--before we have the main course of the meal. You are eager to provide the fluff but not the substance.

I recommend that the proposed rule be revised to address a real need faced by blind people of the country, requiring tv networks to make accessible news and weather information currently merely flashed on the screen and not revealed to blind people through the spoken word. This would be a very constructive contribution the FCC could make on behalf of the blind population of the nation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed rule.

Joyce Scanlan
5132 Queen Avenue, South
Minneapolis, MN 55410-2217

--

Joyce Scanlan, Executive Director
Blindness: Learning In New Dimensions (BLIND), Inc.
<mailto:jscanlan@blindinc.org>
<http://www.blindinc.org>

,