

Stephen O. Benson
7020 N. Tahoma Avenue
Chicago, IL 60646

March 22, 2000

Magalie Roman Salas
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW TW A 325

Re: Comments on Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Matter of
Video Description of Video Programming

Dear Mr. Salas:

I vehemently oppose mandated use of audio description of visual images by television networks and stations using the secondary audio programming (SAP) channel. Even though the proposal is a limited mandate, I regard the direction the FCC intends to take on this matter to be dangerous and wasteful. It is crucial that emergency information, weather, or otherwise, be verbalized, not merely scrawled across the bottom of the screen by a character generator.

I urge the FCC to take all necessary steps to encourage television stations to make emergency information, the names of individuals interviewed in news casts, and telephone numbers, to be available on the SAP, or verbalized by announcers.

I have viewed videocassettes with narrations of sets, descriptions of individuals and their actions. I found these narrations to be intrusive, irritating and for the most part, not helpful. They tell me much more than is necessary. Much of what is conveyed in these narratives is detectable by sound and by dialogue. I know what a car door sounds like when it is opened and closed. It is ridiculous for the announcer to tell me a car door has been opened and closed.

Once again, descriptive video with regard to entertainment is fluff not essential and not desirable. If descriptive video is implemented at all, it must cover news and emergency information. If you have any questions, please contact me at 773-594-9977, or contact James Gashel, Director of Governmental Affairs, National Federation of the Blind, 410-659-9314.

Very truly,

Stephen O. Benson