***Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act of 2023* (CVTA)**

**Introduced by Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) and Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA-18)**

On July 25, 2023 – the eve of the 33rd anniversary of the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act – Senator Markey and Congresswoman Eshoo introduced the *Communications, Video, and Technology Accessibility Act of 2023* to ensure that people with disabilities have full access to the range of mainstream communication, video programming, and emerging technologies needed to participate equally in professional, educational, recreational, and civic contexts. This legislation builds upon the *21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act* (CVAA) of 2010 by ensuring access to these current and emerging products and services that continue to become essential to our daily lives.

The major ways that the CVTA will enhance communications, video and technology accessibility are by:

Video Programming Access

* Requiring closed captioning for online video programming that mirrors current televised video programming requirements, with a limited exemption for certain user-generated video;
* Requiring audio description for both televised and online video programming (with the same limited user-generated video exemption) and requiring such programming to be labeled and easily searchable;
* Directing the FCC to regularly update its closed captioning quality standards, revisit old categorical exemptions from the captioning requirements, and establish audio description quality standards;
* Requiring video programming devices, such as televisions and computers, to include features that allow easy activation and customization of closed captioning and audio description preferences and compatibility with assistive technologies, such as braille, sip & puff and voice control technologies;
* Directing the FCC to establish standards that ensure the visibility of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters when these individuals are used on news and other video programming;

Communications Access

* Requiring video conferencing services to have built-in accessibility features and the ability to connect with assistive technologies, including ASL interpreters, captioning, visual image descriptive services, telecommunications relay services (TRS), screen readers, braille displays, and hands free and voice control technologies;
* Expanding the scope of the National DeafBlind Equipment Distribution Program to reach a greater number of eligible persons who could benefit from receiving accessible communications devices;
* Ensuring that deaf people who use ASL have equitable access to 9-1-1 emergency services through the use of direct video calling and TRS — for example through one step wireless access that can deliver location information to 911 emergency centers;
* Expanding the scope of the TRS program to better assist ASL users and people who are DeafBlind, and adding video conferencing providers to the list of contributors that must help fund TRS;
* Requiring the FCC to complete its pending rulemaking on real-time text for wireline and wireless Voice over the Internet (VoIP) services to ensure text-based telephone access for people who are deaf and hard of hearing after the full migration to digital telephone technologies;
* Empowering the FCC to ensure that its accessibility regulations keep pace with emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality platforms.