

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

BEFORE THE UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

\* \* \* \* \*

In the Matter of

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF RATES )  
FOR DEAF PERSONS USING ) ADMINISTRATIVE CASE NO. 220  
TELETYPEWRITER TYPE SERVICE )

O R D E R

After receiving requests that lower toll rates be established for deaf persons using the teletypewriter (TTY) method of service, the Commission on its own volition scheduled a hearing to receive testimony from both interested parties and the telephone utilities with respect to this issue.

The teletypewriter (TTY) service is a means of typed communication, which enables a deaf person to correspond using the telephone. As the type method of communication is far slower than spoken communication, the time required to initiate and complete the message is much longer and therefore long distance charges are greater.

The hearing was scheduled for January 23, 1980, at 2:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time, in the office of the Utility Regulatory Commission at Frankfort, Kentucky. The hearing was held as scheduled and all parties of interest were given the opportunity to be heard. The Division of Consumer Intervention of the Attorney General's Office was represented as an intervenor for consumers.

As the hearing, there were three major issues of concern to those who testified on behalf of the subject proposal (Petitioners). The first was the problems encountered by users of TTY devices in obtaining operator, directory, and information assistance from the telephone utilities. South Central Bell Telephone Company (Bell) testified that American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) will, by the end of 1980, place into operation four regional centers which will provide, by the use of toll-free numbers, operator, directory, and information assistance to TTY users in the United States. This action will provide relief to this particular problem.

The second issue of concern to Petitioners is the availability

of TTY devices for deaf persons. At present, the only generally available means of obtaining such devices is through the direct purchase of same. No telephone utility operating in Kentucky offers the device on a monthly rental basis, although Bell testified that the Company intends to tariff such a device with the Commission before the end of 1980.

The third issue of concern which was presented was the request that the Commission require telephone utilities to file with the Commission tariffs establishing lower intrastate toll rates for deaf persons using the TTY type service. The Commission notes that a Bill has been introduced in the United States Senate (Senate Bill No. 1869), which among other things, would grant a Federal Tax Credit for both intrastate and interstate toll calls to qualified users of the TTY type services.

The Commission, after considering this matter, including the hearing and all correspondence of record, is of the opinion and finds that:

(1) The problems encountered by users of TTY devices in obtaining operator, directory, and information assistance will be resolved by AT&T's proposed regional assistance centers, and therefore no action is required on this issue by the Commission;

(2) Qualified deaf persons desiring to use TTY type services should be able to obtain these devices on a monthly basis from their local telephone utility, just as the normal telephone user is able to do. Therefore, each telephone company should be required to tariff such a device on a monthly rental basis, at cost, to qualified deaf persons;

(3) The deaf subscribers are unique among special interest groups in that such persons who use the TTY type services are handicapped in their ability to communicate by being required to spend much more time to achieve the same amount of communication as those who use the spoken word, and therefore, qualified deaf subscribers should receive a reasonable discount on intrastate toll rates;

(4) Bell should be required to file tariffs which provide a 35% discount from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 60% discount from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. on weekdays and all-hours on Saturday and

Sunday, to qualified deaf persons who have the TTY type devices;

(5) All other telephone companies, which normally file tariffs concurring with Bell's intrastate toll tariffs, should be required to concur with this new tariff provision.

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that, within one-hundred-twenty (120) days of the date of this Order, each Telephone Utility operating in Kentucky shall file with the Commission tariffs which provide for the offering of teletypewriter devices to qualified deaf persons, on a monthly rental rate, at the actual direct costs to the utility of such devices.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that each Telephone Utility shall file with its tariff costs studies which show the direct cost to the utility of the teletypewriter device which it tariffs with the Commission.

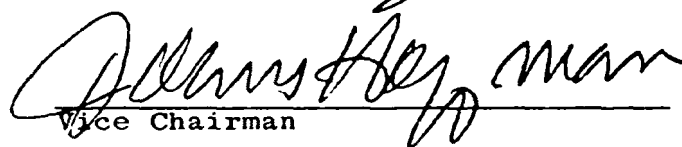
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, not later than May 5, 1980, South Central Bell Telephone Company shall file with the Commission tariffs, to be effective not later than twenty (20) days from the date of such filing, which grant a 35% discount from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on weekdays, and 60% discount from 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 a.m. on weekdays and all-hours on Saturday and Sunday, to accounts of qualified deaf persons who have the teletypewriter devices.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that, not later than May 5, 1980, all other Telephone Utilities shall file with the Commission tariffs which concur with South Central Bell's tariff reflecting the lower intrastate toll rates for qualified deaf persons who have the teletypewriter devices.

Done at Frankfort, Kentucky, this 19th day of February, 1980.

UTILITY REGULATORY COMMISSION

  
Chairman

  
Vice Chairman

  
Commissioner

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary