

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING ALLIANCE

Alexander Graham Bell
Association for the Deaf
and Hard of Hearing

American Academy
of Audiology

American Society
for Deaf Children

American Speech-
Language-Hearing
Association

Conference of Educational
Administrators of Schools
and Programs for the Deaf

Council of American
Instructors of the Deaf

Deafness Research
Foundation

Hands & Voices

Hearing Loss Association
of America

National Association
of the Deaf

National Court Reporters
Association

National Cued Speech
Association

Registry of Interpreters
for the Deaf

Telecommunications for
the Deaf and Hard of
Hearing, Inc.

Consumer Co-Chair:
Barbara Raimondo
Conference of Educational
Administrators of Schools and
Programs for the Deaf

Professional Co-Chair:
Ingrida Lusic
American Speech-Language-
Hearing Association

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Joel F. Dubina
The Honorable Frank M. Hull
The Honorable Stanley Marcus
U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit
Elbert P. Tuttle United States Court of Appeals Building
56 Forsyth Street N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Chief Judge Dubina, Judge Hull, and Judge Marcus:

We have read with interest of the decision by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals to release audio recordings of proceedings in the legal appeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable [Health] Care Act of 2010, citing the importance of this proceeding to the American public and its interest in access to the deliberations.

The Deaf and Hard of Hearing Alliance urgently requests that the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals provide similar access to the estimated 30 million deaf and hard-of-hearing American citizens. Their interests in this matter are equal if not greater than those of the general public and they deserve the same access as other citizens.

Unfortunately, an audio tape/digital recording is of little or no use to someone who cannot hear it.

There are readily available accommodations routinely used to afford such access for deaf and hard of hearing Americans to civic activities, including realtime captioning to the internet and CART (Communications Access Realtime Translation). At a minimum, the court should ensure the timely availability of a written transcript of the upcoming proceedings on the Affordable Care Act to the public on terms comparable to those for whom an audio recording is adequate.

Over the past two decades, there has been a push from the courts to allow increased public access to court proceedings. It would be a grave injustice if deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens were excluded from this landmark proceeding which, regardless of outcome, will have an enormous impact on the nation. We urge you to take immediate steps to ensure equal access to this important proceeding, access that an audio recording alone does **not** provide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



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