



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WEBSITE VIDEOS
TO BE ACCESSIBLE TO DEAF INDIVIDUALS**

WASHINGTON, DC -- September 21, 2012 -- In response to a lawsuit filed on behalf of a deaf resident, the District of Columbia has agreed to issue a Mayoral Order requiring that the District provide accessibility for persons who are deaf and hard of hearing to videos which it posts on its website and on third party websites such as YouTube and Vimeo.

The lawsuit, brought by the Washington Lawyers' Committee, with the law firms of Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP and Foley & Lardner LLP, alleged that most of the videos posted online by the District - on the DC website, www.dc.gov, or on third party websites - either had no captions or had captions that were not intelligible. As a result, deaf residents were unable to access important information about DC services and benefits.

The Mayoral Order, entitled "Video Accessibility for Persons who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing," which will be signed within thirty days, requires virtually every DC agency to properly caption all new videos which it publishes on the internet for dissemination to the public. The captioning requirements for individual DC Public Schools and the DC Office of Cable Television, due to the nature of their videos, are somewhat different, in that these entities may opt to provide captioned DVDs, transcripts or subsequent captioning upon consumer request. Certain videos published online prior to the Order will be captioned, and transcription services for other previously published non-captioned videos will be available at no charge for any consumer or resident who is deaf or hard of hearing. The Office of the Chief Technology Officer ("OCTO") shall enforce video captioning by District agencies, and will have the authority to revoke an agency's permission to post its own web content if that agency demonstrates continuing failure to caption videos as required by the Order.

Representation in this case was provided by the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, Boies, Schiller & Flexner LLP and Foley & Lardner LLP. The Washington Lawyers' Committee is a non-profit organization established in 1968 to provide legal services to address discrimination. Boies, Schiller & Flexner, with over 250 lawyers practicing in offices strategically located throughout the United States, regularly serves as lead counsel on complex, high profile global matters. Foley & Lardner, LLP, a major firm with offices throughout the United States and across the globe combining powerful national resources with local focus, is one of the top *pro bono* firms in the country.

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