



## The Audio Description Project

An Initiative of the American Council of the Blind  
Formerly AD International



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### Audio Description (Video Description) on TV

#### FCC Adopts Two Key Provisions

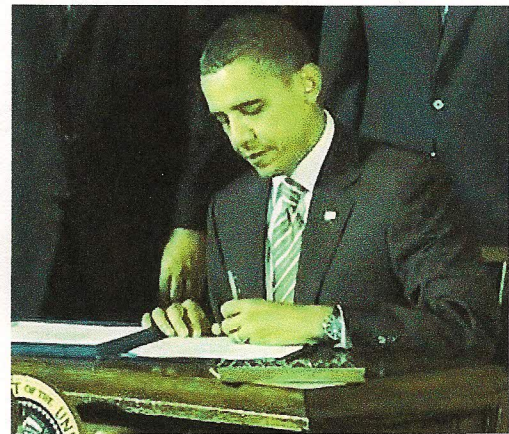
In early March, 2011, the FCC adopted two key provisions of the newly enacted 21st Century Communications & Video Accessibility Act without the need for further public discussion:

- Reinstatement of the **video description rules** previously adopted by the FCC in 2000.
- Rules requiring providers of advanced communications services and manufacturers of equipment used for those services to **make their products accessible** to people with disabilities.

[Further details](#) are available at COAT. At the same time, FCC Commissioner Michael Copps has [praised](#) CBS, FOX, PBS, TCM, and TNT for having voluntarily continued producing some shows with description even after the FCC's mandate was overturned in 2002. At this time, however, no specific date or details for enforcement of video description has been announced. The legislation, detailed below, would imply that date would be October 2011. (Updated March 20)

#### Video Description Legislation Becomes Law

On October 8, 2010, President Obama signed **The 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act**. Earlier, the House passed HR 3101 (Twenty-first Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2009) and the Senate passed a modified S 3304 (Equal Access to 21st Century Communications Act), which was closer to HR 3101 than their original version, then voted on some technical amendments (S 3828). The House then voted on the modified Senate bill on September 28, 2010, which was subsequently signed by President Obama. Passage of those bills required a lot of lobbying by members of [COAT](#) and others, so congratulations to all who helped!



The new law assures restoration of the FCC's authority to mandate **video description**, at least for the largest networks in the largest population areas (although not for one year, October 2011). Now actually being able to *receive* description on your TV is a different story, but this is the start that we've been waiting EIGHT long years for!

#### Key Links

- [Eric Bridge's Summary of the Provisions of the Act](#)
- [Law Firm's Summary of the Act and Its Implications](#)
- [View the Video of the Signing](#)
- [Read a Transcript of the Signing](#)
- [If TV's Far-Sighted, It Will Serve The Blind](#)
- [Audio Description on TV Outside the USA](#)
- See bottom of this page for additional references

