**PENNSYLVANIA**

# **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265**

Public Meeting held March 28, 2019

Commissioners Present:

Gladys M. Brown, Chairman

David W. Sweet, Vice Chairman

Norman J. Kennard

Andrew G. Place

John F. Coleman, Jr.

Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay M-00900239

Service Advisory Board

**OPINION AND ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSION:**

The Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) is a communications service regulated by the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (Commission) that offers a person with disabilities the ability to communicate “by wire or radio with a hearing individual in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of a person who does not have a disability to communicate using voice communication services by wire or radio,” *i.e.*,access to the Public Switched Telephone Network in the same manner as a person without disability.[[1]](#footnote-2) TRS offers persons who are hearing, deaf, and hearing or speech impaired three ways to connect to the service using various means: Traditional Telephone Relay, Video Relay and Internet Relay. Users who access TRS by telephone simply dial 7-1-1 to connect to a skillfully-trained Communications Assistant, or CA, who follows a strict code of ethics and confidentiality for telephone TRS communications. The CA then relays messages to the other person. TRS is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

By Order entered May 29, 1990 (*May 29, 1990 Order*), the Commission established the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board (TRS Advisory Board) for the purpose of reviewing the success of TRS in Pennsylvania. The TRS Advisory Board was also assigned the task of identifying any additional improvements which might need to be implemented to ensure the continued success of the TRS program. The TRS Advisory Board is composed of the following representatives: Hamilton Relay Inc. (Hamilton Relay) (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms); Hamilton Telephone Company d/b/a Hamilton Telecommunications (Hamilton Telephone) (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms);[[2]](#footnote-3) the Pennsylvania Telephone Association (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms); the Commission (2 representatives who may serve unlimited terms), the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing (ODHH) (1 representative who may serve unlimited terms), and from the community of persons who are, or who have experience with, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or those with language and speech disorders (7 representatives who may serve up to two two-year consecutive terms). The TRS Advisory Board meets quarterly in Harrisburg and functions as a user group providing guidance in such areas as problem solving and future enhancements.

The TRS Advisory Board By-Laws provide for 7 representatives from the community of persons who are, or who have experience with, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, or those with language and speech disorders, to serve on the TRS Advisory Board. The nominee for the TRS Advisory Board for the two-year term ending January 31, 2021, is Amy S. Goldman.

Ms. Goldman is a current TRS Advisory Board member whose two-year term expired on January 31, 2019. She has served on the TRS Advisory Board in various capacities, including Secretary. Ms. Goldman is a speech-language pathologist whose career has focused on how technology empowers people with significant speech impairments. She has conducted training on the importance of telecommunications for people with communication disabilities, both pre-service and continuing education, with an emphasis for transitioning youth. Her accomplishments also include providing testimony to the FCC on access to telecommunications for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Ms. Goldman has also been involved through the Temple University Institute on Disabilities with the actual administration of Pennsylvania’s telecommunications device distribution program (TDDP).[[3]](#footnote-4) Ms. Goldman’s expertise, input, and continued service to the TRS Advisory Board would prove beneficial to the TRS Advisory Board; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the appointment of Ms. Amy S. Goldman to the Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory for the two-year term ending January 31, 2021 is approved.

2. That a copy of this Opinion and Order be served on:

Amy S. Goldman

219 Catharine Street

Philadelphia, PA 19147

**BY THE COMMISSION,**

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Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: March 28, 2019

ORDER ENTERED: March 28, 2019

1. 35 P.S. § 6701.2; *see also* 35 P.S. § 6701.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Hamilton Relay is the certificated jurisdictional provider for intrastate TRS in the Commonwealth. *See* Docket No. A-2014-2447601. Hamilton Telephone is the contractual provider for intrastate Captioned Telephone Relay Service in the Commonwealth. *See* Docket No. A-311355. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. *See generally* 35 P.S. § 6701.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)