**PENNSYLVANIA**

# **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

**Harrisburg, PA 17120**

Public Meeting held April 15, 2021

Commissioners Present:

 Gladys Brown Dutrieuille, Chairman

 David W. Sweet, Vice Chairman

 John F. Coleman, Jr.

Ralph V. Yanora

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 deaf, 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 (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 three, two-year consecutive terms).[[3]](#footnote-4) 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, 2023, is Amy S. Goldman. This is Ms. Goldman’s third consecutive appointment as a community representative to the TRS Advisory Board for a term of at least two years, her first approved by Commission Order entered December 9, 2016, and the second by Commission Order entered March 28, 2019, both at this Docket Number.

Ms. Goldman is a current TRS Advisory Board member whose most recent two-year term expired on January 31, 2021. Ms. Goldman’s credentials and resume are well known to the Commission. As noted in our two prior orders, from 2012 to 2016, Ms. Goldman was an Associate Professor, Special Education Program, Department of Psychology, Organization, and Leadership Studies College of Education, Temple University. 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). [[4]](#footnote-5) As noted, Ms. Goldman has also served on the TRS Advisory Board in various capacities, including Secretary. She 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 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) on access to telecommunications for individuals with intellectual disabilities. 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 Board for the two-year term ending January 31, 2023 is approved.

2. That a copy of this Opinion and Order be served on Amy S. Goldman.

** BY THE COMMISSION,**

Rosemary Chiavetta

 Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: April 15, 2021

ORDER ENTERED: April 15, 2021

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. At a special meeting held on April 12, 2019, the TRS Advisory Board amended its By-Laws to include, *inter alia*, the addition of the TDDP implementing entity as a representative of the TRS Advisory Board and the expansion of the number of terms the community representatives may serve from two to up to three, two-year terms. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *See generally* 35 P.S. § 6701.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)