**PENNSYLVANIA**

# **PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION**

## Harrisburg, PA 17105-3265

Public Meeting held December 8, 2016

Commissioners Present:

Gladys M. Brown, Chairman

Andrew G. Place, Vice Chairman

John F. Coleman, Jr.

Robert F. Powelson

David W. Sweet

Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay M-00900239

Service Advisory Board

**OPINION AND ORDER**

**BY THE COMMISSION:**

The Pennsylvania Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) is a telephone 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 (PSTN) in the same manner as a person without disability.[[1]](#footnote-2) Users simply dial 7-1-1 to connect to a trained Communications Assistant, or CA, who follows a strict code of ethics and confidentiality while relaying relevant communications from the calling party to the called party. The Pennsylvania TRS is available 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

By Order entered May 29, 1990, the Commission established the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board (Board) for the purpose of reviewing the performance of TRS in Pennsylvania. The Board was also assigned the task of identifying any additional improvements which may be needed to ensure the continued success of the TRS program. The Board is composed of representatives from the following: the relay service provider (Hamilton Relay and Hamilton Telecommunications);[[2]](#footnote-3) the Pennsylvania Telephone Association (PTA); the Commission; the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry’s Office for the Deaf & Hard of Hearing; and representatives from the community of persons who are, or who have experience with, persons with disabilities. The Board meets quarterly in Harrisburg and functions as a user group providing guidance in such areas as problem solving and future enhancements. The established term limit of a TRS Board member is two years.

The nominee for the TRS Board position for the two-year term ending

January 31, 2019, is Amy S. Goldman. Ms. Goldman comes to the Board with exemplary credentials and many years of service to the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Community. From 2012, to the present, Ms. Goldman has been Associate Professor, Special Education Program, Department of Psychology, Organization, and Leadership Studies College of Education, Temple University. She also serves as Co-Executive Director, Institute on Disabilities/University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities at Temple University. In this capacity, Ms. Goldman is responsible for all aspects of managing an operation exceeding $5,000,000, including more than 40 full and part-time staff, funded by more than 20 different local, state, federal, and private grants and contracts. [[3]](#footnote-4)

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).[[4]](#footnote-5)

Ms. Goldman is familiar with the tasks of the Board as a result of her past service as liaison between the Board and Temple University as well as with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Labor and Industry. We, unhesitatingly, conclude that Ms. Goldman’s expertise, input, and services already provided to Pennsylvania’s citizens with disabilities will prove beneficial to the TRS Board and the residents served; **THEREFORE,**

**IT IS ORDERED:**

1. That the nomination of Amy S. Goldman to the Telecommunications Relay Service Advisory Board for the two-year term ending January 31, 2019, is approved.

2. That Ms. Amy S. Goldman shall be served with a copy of this Opinion and Order at her preferred mailing address:

AMY S. GOLDMAN

219 Catharine Street

Philadelphia, PA 19147

 **BY THE COMMISSION,**

Rosemary Chiavetta

Secretary

(SEAL)

ORDER ADOPTED: December 8, 2016

ORDER ENTERED: December 9, 2016

1. 35 P.S. § 6701.2; *see also* 35 P.S. § 6701.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Hamilton Relay is the certificated TRS provider for Pennsylvania. Hamilton Relay is the contracted Captioned Telephone Relay provider for Pennsylvania. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. We are advised that Ms. Goldman has retired from service to Temple University as of December 1, 2016, and, therefore, we find no potential for conflict with her participation on the TRS Board. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. *See generally* 35 P.S. § 6701.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)