

## STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MICHAEL K. POWELL

*Re: Amendment of Part 1, Subpart N of the Commission's Rules Concerning Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in the Commission's Programs and Activities.*

Technology has the power to deliver to Americans with disabilities access that previously was unimaginable. Making access solutions available to the disability community has been a core objective of this Commission – from closed captioning to IP relay. Today's *Order* ensures that a high level of access extends to the Commission as well, so that all Americans have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the Commission's work.

Since the Commission first promulgated disability accommodation rules in 1987, there have been many changes in disability law, and the "state of the art" in access technology has advanced considerably. Today's *Order* brings the Commission's rules up-to-date with these changes. In addition, adoption of the Accessibility Handbook will ensure that the Commission's policies are consistently applied and that all Commission staff are adequately prepared to deal with accommodation requests. The Order further provides that every three years the Commission will review its accommodation policies, so that we may learn and grow from our experiences, and keep pace with ever-changing technology. Only through constant vigilance can we ensure that individuals with disabilities are obtaining the best possible accommodations and the highest level of access.

The creation of this Accessibility Handbook was a significant undertaking. I applaud the leadership demonstrated by the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau and its Disability Rights Office in making this remarkable and practical resource a reality – and a model for other federal agencies and the private sector. Such efforts further secure the FCC's place as one of the most accessible institutions in government – an achievement for which I am tremendously proud.