

Technology and Disability Policy Highlights  

February 2018

Overview

In legislative news, the *Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act of 2017* [**H.R.2465**] was passed in the House as part of the bill to temporarily increase the federal government’s budget. The legislation allows for those that purchased voice-generating devices, also referred to as Alternative and Augmentative Communications (AAC), to be reimbursed through Medicaid and Medicare. Originally passed in 2015, this new version would make the Steve Gleason Act of 2015 permanent. The much-debated *ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017* [**H.R.620**] passed by a House vote of 225-192. H.R. 620, intended to prevent the need to file a complaint with Department of Justice (DoJ) or to pursue a private civil lawsuit, proposes to require a person/persons with a disability alleging ADA violations first to notify the entity in writing, allowing them the opportunity to remedy alleged ADA violations.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC or Commission) regulations regarding Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC), Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEA), and next-generation television were published in the Federal Register as Final Rules. The revised HACregulations include a new volume control standard for more precise audio processing and amplification on wireline and wireless telephones, with a compliance deadline of February 28, 2020, and March 1, 2021(respectively). The WEA Final Rule addresses geo-targeting of alert messages, consumer disclosure of the device‘s geo-targeting capabilities, alert message preservation on the mobile device, the definition of “WEA participation,” and Spanish-language alert implementation. The compliance deadline for the new geotargeting rules is November 30, 2019. Finally, the FCC final rule, *Authorizing Permissive Use of the “Next Generation'' Broadcast Television Standard Report & Order* [**GN Docket No. 16-142**], advances efforts to transition from legacy systems to support advanced technologies.

In Wireless RERC news, Ex Parte comments were submitted to the FCC replying to the *Hurricane Response Public Notice* [**PS Docket # 17-344**], and on February 27, 2018, Dr. Helena Mitchell presented the comments at an Ex Parte meeting at the FCC. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Office of the Chairman, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. The intent of the comments was to supply unbiased considerations to help ensure that individuals with disabilities and other populations disproportionately impacted by disasters have alternative and accessible means to receive emergency information when cell coverage is disrupted and access to power is limited.

This issue also includes news about a flying display, accessible transit via sensor technology and virtual assistance, and more.

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Legislative Activities

# Legislation Proposes to Expand Access to Voice-Generating Devices

February 2018 – The *Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act of 2017* [**H.R.2465**] was passed in the house as part of the bill to temporarily increase the federal government’s budget, allowing it to remain open. The budget package heads to the Senate next, where H.R. 2465 will undergo another round of voting. The Gleason Act of 2015 allowed for those that purchased voice-generating devices, also referred to as Alternative and Augmentative Communications (AAC), to be reimbursed through Medicaid and Medicare. As it stands, the proposed Gleason Act would make the Gleason Act of 2015 permanent, as well as remove limits to the number of devices delineated in the original Act. Senator Bill Cassidy, praised the bill, saying it, “gives a voice to those who cannot speak and empowers those affected by degenerative diseases.” [Source Bryn Stole, The Advocate; Library of Congress]

Additional Information:

[Steve Gleason-inspired bill to expand access to voice-generating devices expected to move in House](http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/article_8c9269e0-0b74-11e8-80dc-4325f9fc502f.html) [<http://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/politics/article_8c9269e0-0b74-11e8-80dc-4325f9fc502f.html>]

[Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act of 2017 [**H.R.2465**]](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2465/text?format=txt)

[<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/2465/text?format=txt>]

# Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Education and Reform Act of 2017

February 15, 2018 - Introduced to the House of Representatives in January 2017, the *ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017* [**H.R.620**] was passed by a vote of 225-192. On February 26, 2018, it was received by the Senate. H.R. 620 proposes to require a person or persons with a disability alleging ADA violations first to notify the entity in writing, allowing them the opportunity to remedy alleged ADA violations. Likewise, the business entity must respond in writing with details on how they intend to address the identified barrier to access. These steps are intended to precede and potentially prevent the need to file a complaint with Department of Justice (DoJ) or to pursue a private civil lawsuit. The legislation directs the Judicial Conference of the United States to create a program that encourages this “alternative dispute resolution” with mechanisms in place that shepherd involved parties through the process. Additionally, the bill proposes that the DoJ, property owners, and people with disabilities “develop a program to educate State and local governments and property owners on strategies for promoting access to public accommodations for a person with a disability.” There are proponents and detractors to H.R. 620. Proponents assert that the legislation will decrease abuse of the ADA by attorneys filing frivolous lawsuits. Among those who disparage the legislation is Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL). She stated, “This offensive legislation would undermine civil rights in our nation and reward businesses that fail to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Passing it would send a disgraceful message to Americans with disabilities: their civil rights are not worthy of strong enforcement, and they can, once again, be treated like second-class citizens.” [Sources: Library of Congress; Patrick Sisson, Curbed; Carlos Ballesteros, Newsweek]

#### Additional Information:

[*ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017* [H.R. 620]](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/620/text)

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[https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/620/text]](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/620/text%5D)

[Sen. Duckworth: ‘Offensive’ law would weaken landmark ADA](https://www.curbed.com/2018/2/28/17060220/ada-disabled-rights-accessibility-senator-tammy-duckworth)

[<https://www.curbed.com/2018/2/28/17060220/ada-disabled-rights-accessibility-senator-tammy-duckworth>]

[House Votes to Gut the Americans With Disabilities Act to Nip 'Abusive Lawsuits'](http://www.newsweek.com/house-republicans-americans-disabilities-act-civil-rights-808106)

[<http://www.newsweek.com/house-republicans-americans-disabilities-act-civil-rights-808106>]

Regulatory Activities

# FCC Revises Hearing Aid Compatibility Regulations

February 28, 2018 - The FCC Final Rule for the *Hearing Aid Compatibility (HAC) Standards Report and Order* [**CG Docket No. 13-46; WT Docket No. 07-250; WT Docket No. 10-254**] was published in the Federal Register, announcing the compliance deadlines for the revised rules. The revised HACregulations further ensure that millions of Americans with hearing loss can continue to benefit from modern audio technologies. The revisions include a revised volume control standard for more precise audio processing and amplification on wireline telephones, with a compliance deadline of February 28, 2020. Also, the revisions that all newly certified wireless phones must also include the updated volume control standards by March 1, 2021. On a more accelerated timeline is the M3 and T3 ratings requirement for wireless handsets “submitted for equipment certification for a permissive change relating to HAC” after August 28, 2018.For more information on the FCC’s updated rules and regulations, please visit: <https://www.fcc.gov/general/hearing-aid-compatibility-and-volume-control> [Source: Federal Register; FCC]

#### Additional Information:

[HAC Final Rule](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-28/pdf/2018-04012.pdf)

[<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-28/pdf/2018-04012.pdf>]

# Official Start of the Compliance-Clock on Wireless Emergency Alert Rules

February 28, 2018 – The Final Rule for the Wireless Emergency Alerts (*WEA) Second Report and Order and Second Order on Reconsideration* [**15-91; 15-94**] was published in the Federal Register, officially starting the compliance clock. The Final Rule addresses geo-targeting of alert messages, consumer disclosure of the device‘s geo-targeting capabilities, alert message preservation on the mobile device, the definition of “WEA participation,” and Spanish-language alert implementation. Regarding geo-targeting, the Final Rule mandates that wireless providers deliver emergency alerts to targeted geographic areas, with no more than a 0.1-mile overlap over non-crisis coverage areas. This requirement applies to devices capable of being updated to be compatible with new standard and new devices sold after the compliance date of November 30, 2019. Because some consumer devices may not be able to receive the enhanced geo-targeted WEA messages, providers are required to disclose the level of granularity the customer can expect. Further, all emergency alerts must be retrievable and remain on the consumer device for at least 24 hours.

Participation in WEA is voluntary, and providers may participate “in whole” or “in part.” In these Final Rules, the Commission more clearly defines “in whole” to mean “the entirety of their geographic service area, and when all mobile devices that they offer at the point of sale are WEA-capable.” Anything below that level in either device capability or service area is considered “in part.” Because these definitions are new, wireless providers’ original election notices may be inconsistent with the new definitions, and thus the FCC requires providers to renew their elections 120 days from the date of Final Rule publication to ensure they are in alignment. Finally, the Commission agreed with CTIA that the compliance date for the expansion of Spanish-language emergency alerts from 90 characters to up to 360 characters, should be the same as the English-language compliance deadline of May 1, 2019. [Source: Federal Register; FCC]

#### Additional Information:

[WEA Final Rule](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-28/pdf/2018-03990.pdf)

[<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-28/pdf/2018-03990.pdf>]

# FCC’s Final Rule on Next Generation TV Standard

February 2, 2018 – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced its final rule for “next generation” broadcast television standards. In the Authorizing Permissive Use of the “Next Generation'' Broadcast Television Standard Report & Order [GN Docket No. 16-142], the FCC allows television broadcasters to use the optional next-generation broadcast television standard, ATSC 3.0. In 2014, the Commission began rural broadband experiments with the intent of determining market interests, as well as developing and deploying new and more robust television transmission options for citizens. This new ruling will inform the competitive bidding practices for broadcasters, as well as the deployment of next-generation transmission standards. As a voluntary measure, broadcasters can forego the new standard and maintain use of the ATSC 1.0 transmission standard.

With regards to accessibility, the ruling mandates that operators carry the signals of local commercial television stations. The FCC defines a local commercial television station as “any full power television broadcast station, other than a qualified noncommercial educational television station.” Many Americans rely upon these stations for important news and safety information. As part of the provision, broadcasters that use the ATSC 3.0 transmission standard are “expected to comply fully with all relevant Part 79 requirements, which include ensuring that new, nonexempt English language and Spanish language programming distributed on their channels is closed-captioned; that  closed captioning contained in all programming received from video programming providers is passed through; and that local emergency information is accessible to persons who are deaf or hard of hearing and to persons who are blind or have visual disabilities.” In addition, local TV stations and their affiliates are required to provide at least 50 hours of video-described programming per calendar quarter. The R&O further requires that broadcasters provide “reasonable access” to elected officials and provide “equal opportunities” for the public to ensure that these requirements are being met. These include improved accessibility options such as geo-targeting of emergency alerts and alert content tailored to the community level, as well as ensuring that citizens that utilize legacy systems (e.g., ATSC 1.0 only systems) will not lose access to their over-the-air broadcasting and alerting.

This ruling goes hand in hand with FCC efforts to transition from legacy systems to support more advanced content rich 911 and emergency messaging systems. The provisions of the R&O become effective on March 5, 2018. [Source: FCC]

#### Additional Information:

[FCC Authorizing Permissive Use of the “Next Generation'' Broadcast Television Standard; Final Rule](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-02/html/2018-01473.htm)

[<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-02-02/html/2018-01473.htm>]

Wireless RERC Updates

# Wireless RERC on the Record: FM Radio Chip for Public Safety

February 7/February 27, 2018 – The Wireless RERC submitted Ex Parte comments replying to the FCC’s *Hurricane Response Public Notice* [**PS Docket # 17-344**], and on February 27, 2018, Dr. Helena Mitchell presented the comments at an Ex Parte meeting at the FCC. The meeting was attended by representatives from the Office of the Chairman, the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau, and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau. Their comments and questions will be addressed in a written addendum to our original filing.

The Public Notice sought input on the effectiveness of emergency communications technologies, procedures, and policies that were employed in response to hurricanes Harvey, Irma, Maria, and Nate and “additional information relevant to the 2017 hurricane season’s impact on communications generally.[[i]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn1%22%20%5Co%20%22)” The Wireless RERC’s comments were submitted as near-future considerations for remediating communications access issues. The intent was to supply unbiased considerations to help ensure that individuals with disabilities and other populations disproportionately impacted by disasters have alternative and accessible means to receive emergency information when cell coverage is disrupted, and access to power is limited. The Wireless RERC initially addressed this topic in 2013, after several years of severe tornado season damage. We remain convinced that the FM chip capability holds great promise as a public safety application and agree with FCC Chairman Pai’s assessment that “Access to reliable communications services during times of emergency is critical.[[ii]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn2%22%20%5Co%20%22)” Two documents were included in the submission, a short 2-page brief and a longer research brief elucidating the benefits of FM Radio chip activation for emergency response. The submission elaborates on the following three points:

* The Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) was created to reach the public during times of emergency using as many “communications pathways as practicable.”[[iii]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn3%22%20%5Co%20%22)  FM radio on mobile devices is a possible and pragmatic pathway that is not currently being utilized.
* A synergistic relationship between the traditional broadcast industry and the wireless industry could remedy emergency alert and information access concerns held by providers (network congestion), emergency managers (timeliness of message), and by citizens (full access in the most expedient modality).
* Americans living with disabilities are at greater risk of injury and harm during an emergency because the means of attaining information may not be conveyed in a way by which they can discern. A drastic reduction in the number of deaths and injuries could occur if proper communication coupled with accurate forecasting were implemented. We estimated $33 million of related medical expenses over the past ten years could have been avoided.[[iv]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn4%22%20%5Co%20%22)

[[i]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ednref1%22%20%5Co%20%22) FCC. (2017). Hurricane Response Public Notice [PS Docket # 17-344]. Retrieved from <https://apps.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-17-1180A1.pdf>

[[ii]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ednref2%22%20%5Co%20%22) Ibid.

[[iii]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ednref3%22%20%5Co%20%22) FEMA. (2010). Strategic plan for the integrated public alert and warning system (IPAWS) program. Retrieved from <https://www.fema.gov/pdf/emergency/ipaws/ipaws_strategic_plan.pdf>

[[iv]](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/wireless-rerc-record-fm-radio-chip-public-safety%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ednref4%22%20%5Co%20%22) The estimate is based on NWS statistics concerning injuries and fatalities as a result of weather events and extant research on the average costs of emergency room visits.

#### Additional Information:

[ex\_parte\_fcc\_cover\_ltr\_fm\_chip\_in\_mobile\_devices\_2-2018\_final.pdf](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/sites/default/files/ex_parte_fcc_cover_ltr_fm_chip_in_mobile_devices_2-2018_final.pdf)

[fm\_chip\_research\_brief\_2-pager\_save\_lives\_withstand\_catastrophe\_and\_stimulate\_the\_marketplace\_final\_pdf.pdf](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/sites/default/files/fm_chip_research_brief_2-pager_save_lives_withstand_catastrophe_and_stimulate_the_marketplace_final_pdf.pdf)

[research\_brief\_-\_2018\_fm\_radio\_and\_rbds-based\_emergency\_alerting\_final\_pdf.pdf](http://www.wirelessrerc.org/sites/default/files/research_brief_-_2018_fm_radio_and_rbds-based_emergency_alerting_final_pdf.pdf)

# Wireless RERC at 2018 CSUN Assistive Technology Conference

Wireless RERC principal investigator, Helena Mitchell, and researcher, Salimah LaForce, will present *Getting on the Record with the FCC: Public Input Process How To's* at the 33rd CSUN Assistive Technology Conference (CSUN). The session is on Thursday, March 22, 2018, at 3:20 PM. CSUN will convene March 19 to March 23, 2018, in San Diego, California and is the largest international conference addressing topics regarding people with disabilities and assistive and accessible technologies. Conference topics typically pertain to the domains of education, employment and workplace, entertainment, independent living, law and policy, and transportation.

Additional Information:

[Conference Web Page](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Nv6D5snT1e70kOgPF73V6Qt4dSQqGZYDLtbAWPLkh6tOcRma_-rBF2BQB9_BZxdhvGppikyskVHM2WRan6y_ndyDvaU-DmHwyUUEsUxpV9e7QexPT6Wu-VwARnikhGWiM1p3FMasP9QAGB3OaXHFr-9JzFer2dUCmWIVtxqxLUtP3dMmnyM_4ii3TWm6z8NH&c=IfB1FnT58VUvb_i1_mLy64aPVzaeeq_cHsjPe4C46OzOo2_JqWmtkw==&ch=mBAWdfwOrEjSJQJt4PHiGd_nJhagsKvbFjuoM0OPIiaP40I8ZOu-TQ==)

[[http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference](http://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001Nv6D5snT1e70kOgPF73V6Qt4dSQqGZYDLtbAWPLkh6tOcRma_-rBF2BQB9_BZxdhvGppikyskVHM2WRan6y_ndyDvaU-DmHwyUUEsUxpV9e7QexPT6Wu-VwARnikhGWiM1p3FMasP9QAGB3OaXHFr-9JzFer2dUCmWIVtxqxLUtP3dMmnyM_4ii3TWm6z8NH&c=IfB1FnT58VUvb_i1_mLy64aPVzaeeq_cHsjPe4C46OzOo2_JqWmtkw==&ch=mBAWdfwOrEjSJQJt4PHiGd_nJhagsKvbFjuoM0OPIiaP40I8ZOu-TQ==)]

# There's Still Time! Please Take and Share the Survey of User Needs

The SUN is the Wireless RERC's cornerstone survey on wireless technology use by people with disabilities. User responses will help designers and engineers make new wireless devices and services for people with disabilities. Data from the SUN also provides important information to the wireless industry, government regulators, and other researchers to help them make wireless technology more accessible and more useful to people with all types of disabilities.

If you have a disability, please consider taking the Wireless RERC's survey on wireless technology use by people with disabilities. If you know someone who has a disability, please forward the survey to them. Thank you! The survey is available at <http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz>.

[Take the Survey](http://b.gatech.edu/2yvCHnz) and [Share the Survey](http://www.wirelessrerc.gatech.edu/wireless-rerc-launches-latest-survey-user-needs)

Other Items of Interest

# Piccolo Endeavors to be A Gesture-Based Smart Home Hub

February 28, 2018 – Piccolo, from a San Francisco start-up of the same name, is a gesture-based vision assistant system for smart homes. The system uses a combination of advanced motion sensing cameras, artificial intelligence (AI), and voice controls to allow users to control it via voice and gesture commands. Piccolo can detect user input no matter where they are in the room, and aims to be the smart hub of the smart home. This includes its ability to connect to other smart devices, such as for music, television, and light control around the house. The makers of Piccolo envision it being adopted by older adults,wishing to age in place, who can feel safer at home with the fall detection that the device offers, as well as its ability to connect to emergency services. If the system can be fully functional with gesture-only input, it would be a boon for people with hearing and speech disabilities to be able to effectively control smart home devices as it would eliminate the need for voice input.Still in its pilot phase, for more information on Piccolo and its potential to reduce barriers to smart home technologies, please visit their website at <https://www.piccololabs.com/?src=t>. [Source: Lucas Matney, Tech Crunch]

Additional Information:

[Piccolo is Building a Gesture Based Smart Home “Vision Assistant”](https://beta.techcrunch.com/2018/02/28/piccolo-is-building-a-gesture-based-smart-home-vision-assistant/)

[<https://beta.techcrunch.com/2018/02/28/piccolo-is-building-a-gesture-based-smart-home-vision-assistant/>]

# American Association of People with Disabilities Celebrates Expansion of the 2018 Summer Internship Program

February 23, 2018 - Since its inception in 2002, the AAPD Summer Internship Program has connected young people with disabilities with meaningful job opportunities. Funded by donors such as AT&T, Google and the Aid Association for the Blind of the District of Colombia College, the Summer Internship Program helps undergraduate and graduate students and recent graduates with disabilities find jobs with non-profit organizations, Congressional and federal offices in Washington, D.C. For many of these students, it is their first time engaging with the larger disability community in this way. In addition to a summer job, students are matched with a disability mentor to learn about disability history and leadership. AAPD provides financial and transportation support, and in 2018, AAPD is partnering with disability LINK, a center for independent living near Atlanta. Helena Berger, President and CEO of AAPD commented, “We are grateful to have this level of support from so many committed partners. Thanks to their generous support, we have more than tripled the size of the program since 2015 to welcome 27 students as part of our 2018 Summer Internship Program class.” [Source: AAPD]

Additional Information:

[The American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) Recognizes its 2018 Summer Internship Program Funders as the Program](https://www.aapd.com/press-releases/american-association-people-disabilities-aapd-recognizes-2018-summer-internship-program-funders-program-triples-size/)

[<https://www.aapd.com/summer-internship-program/>]

# Summer Research Program for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

February 20, 2018 – Gallaudet University has announced an upcoming summer program for ten undergraduates who will research accessibility and technology. The research aims to “improve accessibility and usability of streamed media for people with sensory disabilities.” Primarily for students who are deaf or hard of hearing, the program will allow the students to learn sign language and try out accessible technologies. Accepted participants receive:

* $5000 stipend,
* Free housing, meals and travel to Washington, DC, and
* Opportunity to present research at conferences.

The program is now accepting applicants, and all who wish to participate should complete these steps:

1. Click on the “Application link" below to submit your online application.
2. Send to raja.kushalnagar@gallaudet.edu:

-- Unofficial college transcript(s)

-- One-page research interest statement. If applicable, describe a major project you did for a course or internship.

-- One letter of recommendation. Ask your recommender to email it to Dr. Kushalnagar (raja.kushalnagar@gallaudet.edu)

1. Send to [raja.kushalnagar@gallaudet.edu](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Csalimah%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CMicrosoft%5CWindows%5CINetCache%5CContent.Outlook%5CYAE5Z43D%5Craja.kushalnagar%40gallaudet.edu) a message stating that you have completed steps 1 and 2. If the form and documents are complete, you will get an acknowledgment email that your application is complete and will be reviewed.

#### Additional Information:

Opportunity for Deaf and Hard of Hearing College Students: Undergraduate Summer Accessibility and Technology Research Program at Gallaudet University

**Application link:** <http://aict.gallaudet.edu/#reu/application>

**Send to:** raja.kushalnagar@gallaudet.edu

# Samsung’s Flying Display Patent Has Potential for Disability Access

February 19, 2018 – Samsung has submitted a patent application for a “flying display device.” The novel design is a screen attached to a drone; sensors can detect where the user’s eyes are looking, avoid objects, and can adjust positioning to keep the screen pointed at the user’s eyes. If this technology is ever realized, it could have utility for some people with disabilities. Those with limited mobility could integrate the device into their home automation systems, as the display could take on the functionality of a phone or virtual assistant. This technology could further allow for ease of video calls for American Sign Language (ASL) users, relieving the need to prop a smartphone or tablet so that the user’s hands are free for signing. It remains unclear if Samsung will shift this technology into production, but the release of the patent sparks speculation about possible disability access applications. [Source: Michael Irving, New Atlas]

Additional Information:

[Samsung patents flying screen that follows the eye](https://newatlas.com/samsung-patent-flying-display-device/53471/)

<https://newatlas.com/samsung-patent-flying-display-device/53471/>

# SkyTrain Uses Long-Range Sensors to Increase Accessibility for Passengers with Disabilities

February 4, 2018 - Metro Vancouver users will soon be able to use radio-frequency identification cards (RFID) rather than a tap of their current card, making it easier for all passengers to catch their train. The new gate will use a long-range proximity sensor to detect the Compass Card’s RFID radio signal from a distance. As part of the Universal Fare Gate Access Program, the TransLink SkyTrain is the world’s first transit authority system that offers hands-free automated access to passengers with disabilities. According to Fare Gate Accessibility, approximately 15 out of 50 people in a wheelchair were unable to access the fare gates which had been installed in 2015. Erin Windross of TransLink SkyTrain said, "The only requirement on the part of commuters was that you had to tap your card at the gate, which works well for the vast majority of passengers." He notes however that this is not an option for all passengers.

The technology was developed by Hyperlight Systems and Translink Skytrain and is expected to increase accessibility while helping cut costs long-term. Ashish Sachdeva, Hyperlight’s founder and director said, “We understood that we needed to solve this problem without new construction. We wanted to build a solution that used the existing fare gate, with integrated software, so that we could use RFID to mimic the tap.” Passengers will complete a form when applying for the new Compass Card, and travelers with disabilities can note their disability type(s), so the agency can be sure to accommodate their needs. The new gate is expected to be installed by the end of this year and will not require an attendant as the current gates do. Kevin Desmond, TransLink's CEO said, "This is all about empowering individuals and making sure we make our system as accessible as possible.” SkyTrain follows an increasing trend to improve travel accessibility and safety for all.  [Source: Claire Swedberg, IOT Journal]

Additional Information:

[RFID Enables Hands-Free Transit Entrance for Vancouver Disabled](http://www.iotjournal.com/articles/view?17199)

[<http://www.iotjournal.com/articles/view?17199>]

# Be My Eyes and Moovit Share Knowledge and Combine Services

February 2, 2018 – Be My Eyes and Moovit have announced their partnership to make transit using the Moovit app more accessible to blind and low vision users. Considered the “Wikipedia of Transit,” Moovit combines public information with information provided by users to amass substantial amounts of data points that display local transit information. Be My Eyes is a free app that pairs more than 55,000 blind and low vision users with 830,000 volunteers in 120 countries who offer live, spoken visual assistance in most languages. As a result of the partnership, Moovit users will be able to access Be My Eyes within the Moovit app at any point during their transit. Users will be connected to Be My Eyes volunteers who can assist in looking for the correct bus or taxi to take, or in any other inquiries that arise. Be My Eyes and Moovit have also agreed to share knowledge regarding public transportation in the hope that each can make their service more accessible. [Source: Global Accessibility News]

Additional Information:

[Be My Eyes and Moovit Share Knowledge and Combine Services](http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2018/02/02/be-my-eyes-and-moovit-join-forces-to-make-public-transit-more-accessible/) [<http://globalaccessibilitynews.com/2018/02/02/be-my-eyes-and-moovit-join-forces-to-make-public-transit-more-accessible/>]

Upcoming Events

# 2018 CSUN Assistive Technology Conference

The *33rd CSUN Assistive Technology Conference* (CSUN), organized by California State University – Northridge, will convene March 19 through March 23, 2018, in San Diego, California. CSUN is the largest international conference addressing topics regarding people with disabilities and assistive and accessible technologies. Conference topics typically pertain to the domains of education, employment and workplace, entertainment, independent living, law and policy, and transportation.

#### Additional Information:

[CSUN Conference Web Page](http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference)

[<http://www.csun.edu/cod/conference>]

# Institute Designed for Educating All Students (IDEAS) Conference

The IDEAS conference will convene from June 5 through June 8, 2018, in St. Simons Island, Georgia. Conference partners include Georgia Tools for Life (GTFL), Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Georgia Council for Exceptional Children (GaCEC), and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). The workshops, presentations, and networking events are designed to provide professional guidance on educating students with disabilities. Past event-goers have reported that attending the conference improved their teaching skills and provided inspiration insights that revived them in their purpose.

#### Additional Information:

[IDEAS Conference Web Page](http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/IDEAS/IDEAS-Conference.aspx)

[<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/IDEAS/IDEAS-Conference.aspx>]

# M-enabling Summit

The 7th Annual M-enabling Summit will convene June 11 through June 13, 2018, in Washington, D.C. This year’s theme is Accessible and Assistive Technologies Innovations: New Frontiers for Independent Living. Summit attendees can expect to hear presentations and visit exhibitors that address next-generation connected devices and services including artificial intelligence, augmented reality, digital assistants, autonomous vehicles, and more.

#### Additional Information:

[M-Enabling Summit Web Page](http://www.m-enabling.com/)

[<http://www.m-enabling.com/>]

# National Emergency Number Association (NENA) 2018 Conference and Expo

NENA 2018 will convene June 16 through 21, 2018 in Nashville, TN. NENA's annual conference is designed to equip attendees with ideas and strategies for overcoming daily obstacles through the provision of experts’ and peers’ experiences. The Expo will feature cutting-edge products and services for 911, specifically, and public safety, in general.

#### Additional Information:

[NENA Conference Web Page](http://www.nena.org/?page=NENA2018)

[<http://www.nena.org/?page=NENA2018>]

**Technology and Disability Policy Highlights,** February 2018



The Technology and Disability Policy Highlights (TDPH) is a monthly newsletter that reports on national public policy events and tracks emerging issues of interest to individuals with disabilities, researchers, policymakers, industry, and advocacy professionals. The Wireless RERC is a research center that promotes universal access to wireless technologies and explores their innovative applications in addressing the needs of people with disabilities. For more information on the Wireless RERC, please visit our website at [<http://www.wirelessrerc.org>]. For further information on items summarized in this report, or if you have items of interest that you would like included in future editions, please contact this edition’s editors Salimah LaForce [[salimah@cacp.gatech.edu](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5Csalimah%5COneDrive%20-%20Georgia%20Institute%20of%20Technology%5CwiRERC_2016%20-%202021%5CTDPH%5CApril%202017%5Csalimah%40cacp.gatech.edu)], Kenneth Goughnour [kenneth@cacp.gatech.edu], or Carter Neely [carterjneely@cacp.gatech.edu].

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