

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Bob Latta
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”**

July 9, 2024

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Good morning, and welcome to today’s oversight hearing of the Federal Communications Commission. This is the third time we’ve had the FCC before us this Congress, and I am pleased that we are maintaining a cadence of consistent oversight hearings.

I want to start by offering the Committee’s condolences to Chairwoman Rosenworcel on the passing of her father. We hope that your memories of him have helped you cope during this difficult time. Although we disagree on policy, we can come together to share each other’s grief.

The last time the FCC was before us, we discussed its role in President Biden’s broadband takeover and its overregulation of the communications industry. Unfortunately, the agency has only continued down this path.

Earlier this year, the FCC voted to reclassify broadband as a common carrier under Title II of the Communications Act. Under the guise of “net neutrality,” this action expands the FCC’s authority over broadband, allowing the agency to impose burdensome regulations that will make it harder for providers to deploy broadband.

As I have stated before, this action is **absolutely unnecessary**. In 2017, after the FCC reversed the

Obama FCC's reclassification of broadband, the Democrats told the world that we would get the internet one-word-at-a-time and that the internet as we knew it would end. As we all know, none of those fears came true.

I asked my office to keep track of how many of my constituents called in after the repeal to say they lost their internet – and I received zero calls.

Instead, broadband networks thrived because of increased investment by private companies that has led to higher speeds and lower prices. Indeed, our networks survived the ultimate stress test when they withstood increased usage as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, when almost every aspect of everyday life went online. Contrast what happened in the

United States to what happened in Europe, where regulators had to ask websites like YouTube and Netflix to throttle and degrade service to withstand the increased demand.

At our last hearing, Chairwoman Rosenworcel attributed our success to states enacting their own net neutrality policies but that couldn't be further from the truth. The internet continued to function normally between the repeal and states enacting their laws, only a few states acted, and none enacted anything close to the utility-style regulations that the FCC repealed and is now reimposing. The true source of success for our networks was the light-touch regulatory framework that the FCC just moved away from.

This action is just one of many taken by this FCC to hinder United States leadership in technology. The effect of these decisions is that deploying broadband and providing service will be more challenging for providers. These actions could not come at a worse time. Congress provided \$42.5 billion to close the digital divide. The Commission is undermining that effort by imposing regulations that will make it more **expensive and more burdensome to deploy**, when they should be doing the opposite. I urge the FCC to reverse course and restore the light-touch regulatory environment that allowed broadband investment to thrive.

I have many questions about the direction the Commission is taking, and I thank the Commissioners for being here today. I look forward

to discussing these and other important issues before the Commission.

I now recognize my colleague, the Ranking Member of this subcommittee, the gentlelady from California's Seventh District, for her opening statement.