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6 OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

7 WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026

8 House of Representatives,

9 Subcommittee on Communications and Technology,

10 Committee on Energy and Commerce,

11 Washington, D.C.

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14 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:16 a.m. in
15 Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Richard Hudson
16 [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

17 Present: Representatives Hudson, Allen, Latta,
18 Griffith, Bilirakis, Carter of Georgia, Fulcher, Pfluger,
19 Cammack, Obernolte, Houchin, Fry, Kean, Goldman, Fedorchak,
20 Guthrie (ex officio); Matsui, Soto, Clarke, Ruiz, Peters,
21 Dingell, Kelly, Barragan, Carter of Louisiana, Menendez,
22 Landsman, McClellan, Castor, and Pallone (ex officio).

23 Also present: Representatives Joyce; Mullin, and Tonko.

24 Staff Present: Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Michael
25 Essington, Chief Counsel; Sydney Greene, Director of Finance
26 and Logistics; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Noah Jackson,
27 Clerk; AT Johnson, Special Advisor; Sophie Khanahmadi, Deputy

28 Staff Director; Brayden Lacefield, Special Assistant; John
29 Lin, Senior Counsel; Sarah Meier, Counsel and
30 Parliamentarian; Joel Miller, Chief Counsel; Elaina Murphy,
31 Professional Staff Member; Dylan Rogers, Professional Staff
32 Member; Chris Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director;
33 Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Hannah Anton,
34 Minority Policy Analyst; Parul Desai, Minority Chief Counsel;
35 Ava Digre, Minority Intern; Waverly Gordon, Minority Deputy
36 Staff Director and General Counsel; Tiffany Guarascio,
37 Minority Staff Director; Jackson Hall, Minority Intern; Will
38 McAuliffe, Minority Chief Counsel; Dan Miller, Minority
39 Professional Staff Member; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff
40 Assistant; Johanna Thomas, Minority Counsel; Hannah Treger,
41 Minority Staff Assistant; and Caroline Wood, Minority
42 Research Analyst.

43

44 *Mr. Hudson. The Subcommittee will come to order, and
45 the chair recognizes himself for an opening statement.

46 Good morning, and welcome to today's oversight hearing,
47 the first of this Congress, of the Federal Communications
48 Commission.

49 Welcome back, Chairman Brendan Carr. Congratulations on
50 your appointment as chairman.

51 And welcome to Commissioner Anna Gomez. I look forward
52 to your testimony today.

53 And I want to extend a special welcome -- or should I
54 say welcome back, or maybe welcome home -- to Commissioner
55 Olivia Trusty. Congratulations on your confirmation, and
56 welcome to your first oversight hearing in your old stomping
57 grounds here at the Energy and Commerce. It is always great
58 for us to see a former staffer on the committee rise to such
59 heights to be a commissioner on the FCC. We are really proud
60 of you, and appreciate you being here with us today. I know
61 Mr. Latta is very proud of you, as well.

62 The FCC had an active 2025 that can be summed up in one
63 word: deregulation. Under Chairman Carr the FCC has taken
64 significant steps to reduce barriers to broadband deployment,
65 modernize outdated regulatory regimes, and delete obsolete
66 rules. These efforts include preempting state and local
67 barriers to wireless infrastructure deployment, which I
68 appreciate -- as some of you all have heard me talk about, I

69 am too familiar with calls dropping too often when I am
70 driving around my own district -- reforming the satellite
71 licensing process, and ensuring that Next Generation 911
72 networks are reliable and interoperable, another issue that I
73 have made a top priority of mine over the years.

74 And Chairman, I want to say thank you that the first
75 official trip you took as chairman was to western North
76 Carolina to look at Hurricane Helene impacts on our
77 communications network. So I appreciate the priority you
78 have put on this issue.

79 Together, these efforts will accelerate closing the
80 digital divide, unleash the new space economy, and strengthen
81 America's wireless leadership. I applaud the FCC for this
82 great work.

83 The FCC still has significant work ahead, including
84 modernizing outdated media ownership rules. Last year I led
85 a bipartisan letter with more than 70 Members of Congress,
86 urging the commission to revisit its broadcast ownership
87 caps. Local broadcasters remain the most trusted sources of
88 news for most Americans, yet they now compete with an uneven
89 marketplace shaped by well-resourced new entrants, most
90 notably big tech. Burdened by outdated regulations, local
91 broadcasters are increasingly unable to compete, a reality
92 reflected in newsroom closures and the growing concentration
93 of influence among national networks and social media

94 platforms.

95 Current ownership caps prevent broadcasters from
96 combining or expanding operations, constraining their ability
97 to invest in local journalism. Updating these caps would
98 help ensure broadcasters remain viable and competitive
99 without creating monopolies. It would empower local stations
100 to better compete against dominant platforms. I urge the
101 Commission to keep these realities in mind as you continue
102 your deregulatory agenda.

103 A huge accomplishment this year was the Working Families
104 Tax Cut Act direction to the FCC to auction 800 megahertz of
105 spectrum for commercial use. Making the spectrum available
106 is essential to America's leadership in 5G and 6G. I am
107 pleased that the agency has already begun this work by
108 identifying at least 100 megahertz for auction in the upper
109 C-band. As the agency looks for remaining spectrum both on
110 its own and in coordination with others, I know you have
111 important decisions to make, and I urge the FCC to be mindful
112 of investment that has already taken place in the existing
113 commercial bands such as the six gigahertz band and the CBRS
114 band. The proposal your agenda laid out this month to expand
115 unlicensed operations in the 6G band is a great, great first
116 step.

117 Finally, I am a member of the bipartisan, bicameral
118 Universal Services Fund working group. The USF, overseen by

119 the FCC, helps support broadband access to high-cost rural
120 areas, to schools and libraries, rural health centers, and
121 low-income households. Last year the Supreme Court upheld
122 the constitutionality of USF, but it is past time to reform
123 this program to ensure the long-term sustainability and
124 ensure the funds are reaching the right people. Congress
125 needs to reexamine what the USF supports and how it is
126 funded. A sustainable USF is essential to ensuring all
127 Americans have access to affordable, reliable broadband.
128 Given the FCC's role in administering the fund, I look
129 forward to discussing ways to ensure the USF remains viable
130 for future generations.

131 Today's hearing is an opportunity to discuss the many
132 important issues before the FCC. Again, I thank the
133 commissioners for being here today and I look forward to our
134 conversations.

135 [The prepared statement of Mr. Hudson follows:]

136

137 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

138

139 *Mr. Hudson. I now recognize the ranking member, the
140 gentlelady from California, for her opening statement.

141 *Ms. Matsui. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am
142 glad we are holding this hearing.

143 The Federal Communications Commission affects people's
144 everyday lives. It determines whether you can call 911,
145 whether your internet bill is affordable, and whether local
146 news can do its job without political interference.

147 Oversight is not optional; it is our responsibility.
148 The FCC serves the public, not any president, not any party,
149 and not any one political agenda. It is supposed to be an
150 independent expert agency that promotes competition, protects
151 public safety, and expands connectivity to our rural and
152 urban communities. But President Trump and Chairman Carr
153 have repeatedly abused the FCC's power.

154 We don't have speech police in America; we have the
155 First Amendment. Yet under Chairman Carr we have seen a
156 pattern of pressuring the media to tow the administration's
157 line. He warned Disney and ABC stations we can do this the
158 easy way or the hard way to push them to take Jimmy Kimmel
159 off the air. He threatened to investigate or revoke the
160 license of local stations over content the administration
161 doesn't like. And he has opened investigations into
162 newsrooms' routine editing decisions such as CBS condensing
163 an interview for time. That is not calling balls and

164 strikes; that is censorship by intimidation.

165 Chairman Carr has stressed the standards of acting in
166 the public interest and preventing news distortion beyond
167 recognition. The FCC's own guidance sets a high bar for news
168 distortion. The FCC can only go after deliberate distortion,
169 not mere inaccuracy or difference of opinion. Yet, like the
170 rest of the Trump Administration, this FCC seems to believe
171 it is above the law and the Constitution. That is why I
172 introduced the Broadcast Freedom and Independence Act to draw
173 a bright line. The FCC cannot target broadcasters based on
174 viewpoint, and the White House cannot use the FCC to settle
175 political scores.

176 The threats this FCC poses to journalistic independence
177 have been local as well as national. In Sacramento people
178 rely on local stations for wildfire updates, flood warnings,
179 and breaking news. Local news is a lifeline for communities.
180 When a handful of companies control local stations,
181 communities lose independent voices, newsrooms face layoffs,
182 and viewers are left with fewer trusted sources. That is why
183 Congress set strict limits for how big any one TV station
184 owner can get.

185 No company can reach more than 39 percent of U.S.
186 households. That is the law. So it is deeply concerning
187 when the Trump FCC appears open to deals that weaken local
188 independents and plainly violates the law, deals like

189 Nexstar's acquisition of TEGNA, which would create a media
190 giant reaching 80 percent of U.S. households. And in
191 Sacramento, Nexstar TEGNA would put two over four English
192 language local TV stations under the same owner. That should
193 raise flags for anyone who believes in protecting local news
194 and competition.

195 Finally, I want to address cybersecurity. Our
196 communications networks are critical infrastructure. They
197 carry our calls, texts, and data. They support hospitals,
198 small businesses, and emergency alerts, and they are under
199 attack. After Salt Typhoon, the worst telecom hack in U.S.
200 history, the FCC began moving toward enforceable
201 cybersecurity requirements for companies -- not just
202 voluntary promises -- but Chairman Carr reversed course,
203 leaving our networks more exposed.

204 So today we are going to put this record under a
205 spotlight. The public deserves to know what Chairman Carr
206 thinks public interest means, and why he is using -- to
207 pressure speech. Communities deserve to know why local
208 voices are being squeezed by consolidation. And Americans
209 deserve to know why cybersecurity protections were weakened
210 at the moment we need them the most.

211

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213

214 [The prepared statement of Ms. Matsui follows:]

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216 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

217

218 *Ms. Matsui. I look forward to hearing from the
219 witnesses, and I yield back.

220 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. I now recognize the chairman
221 of the full committee, the gentleman from Kentucky, for five
222 minutes for his opening statement.

223 *The Chair. Well, thank you, Chairman Hudson, and thank
224 you for holding this important oversight hearing, and thank
225 you to our commissioners for being here.

226 Commissioner Trusty, welcome back to the committee. We
227 are glad to have you back here. And we always say -- and it
228 is true -- that we get -- the Members of Energy and Commerce
229 get to work with the best people on Capitol Hill, and you
230 were a part of our group at one time and we appreciate having
231 you, having you back.

232 And this is an exciting time for the FCC, an exciting
233 time to be there. The Working Families Tax Act restored the
234 FCC's Spectrum Auction Authority, which had elapsed for more
235 than two years. It also set a target of 800 megahertz of
236 spectrum to be identified and made available for commercial
237 use. These actions will help meet the growing demand for
238 spectrum, but also, more importantly, ensure the U.S.
239 continues to be the leader in 5G and even developing 6G.

240 Under the first Trump Administration the FCC made a
241 significant amount of mid-band spectrum available for
242 licensed use, and opened up 1,200 megahertz of spectrum for

243 unlicensed use. This strengthened our position as a global
244 technology leader, and American innovators have seized the
245 opportunity. But in the years ahead the United States must
246 continue to lead in wireless innovation. Otherwise,
247 adversaries like China will dominate this battle and set
248 their own standards according to the values of the Chinese
249 Communist Party. That is harmful to both our economic growth
250 and our national security, and I would say the security of
251 the world. Facing these risks, we must act quickly. I am
252 pleased that the Commission under Chairman Carr has already
253 started implementing aspects of this law, and has prioritized
254 security throughout the communications sector.

255 Another area where the FCC is working to maintain and
256 expand American leadership is in space. Under Chairman
257 Carr's leadership, the Commission has been hard at work
258 modernizing satellite regulations. We have also seen -- we
259 have seen significant investment in innovation in space in
260 recent years. Americans have long relied on GPS and other
261 satellite-based communications services. But today more
262 Americans use satellite services for connectivity at home and
263 on the go. I am pleased that the Commission has made this a
264 priority.

265 Finally, I have noted several times during this Congress
266 the urgency of updating media regulation to allow regulated
267 industries the opportunity to compete against new platforms,

268 and specifically the big tech companies who are competing
269 with broadcasting cable companies for advertising revenue and
270 viewership. It is important to remove outdated regulations,
271 and I appreciate Chairman Carr's efforts to modernize these
272 legacy regulatory structures to reduce burdens on incumbent
273 industries.

274 This is an important time for the FCC. I look forward
275 to hearing from the commissioners.

276 [The prepared statement of The Chair follows:]

277

278 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

279

280 *The Chair. And I yield back.

281 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you, Chairman. I now recognize the
282 gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member of the full
283 committee, for five minutes for his opening statement.

284 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

285 One of President Trump's most defining qualities has
286 been his contempt for American media and his hostility
287 towards the First Amendment. Trump has repeatedly attacked
288 and threatened late night hosts for making jokes that bruise
289 his ego, dismissed reporting he does not like as fake news,
290 smeared journalists for merely doing their jobs, and taking
291 completely meritless legal action against news networks that
292 do not bend to his will. And he has also debased the office
293 he holds by resorting to bullying and name-calling, recently
294 telling a veteran reporter who asked a question about the
295 Epstein files -- and I quote -- "Quiet, piggy."

296 On duty -- or, I should say, our duty -- here is to
297 conduct oversight of the Federal Communications Commission,
298 and that has never been more critical than it is today
299 because in Trump's ongoing crusade to chill free speech,
300 punish news networks, and vilify American journalism, there
301 has been no greater ally than Chairman Brendan Carr.

302 Over the last year Chairman Carr has grossly distorted
303 the power and purpose of the FCC, he has weaponized the
304 agency to benefit Trump and punish anyone who challenges him,

305 he has rubber-stamped shady deals between media conglomerates
306 when those deals have included monetary and political
307 benefits for the President, he opened a sham -- or sham
308 investigations into small local media outlets for simply
309 reporting on publicly available information about ICE raids.
310 He weaponized the FCC's public interest principles to bully
311 news organizations, and Chairman Carr repeatedly violated the
312 First Amendment by threatening and intimidating broadcasters
313 who aired speech that the President does not like.

314 Now, you don't have to take my word for it. There is a
315 reason why a Republican Senator, Ted Cruz, said that Chairman
316 Carr's actions have been -- and I quote -- "right out of
317 Goodfellas, and dangerous as hell.'" This was never more
318 apparent than when Chairman Carr threatened to revoke
319 American broadcasters' licenses if they did not take action
320 against a comedy program, The Jimmy Kimmel Show, telling them
321 -- and I quote -- "We can do this the easy way or the hard
322 way.'" And let's be very clear about what happened there.
323 The Federal Government threatened to wield its power to stamp
324 out speech it did not like, and this is a violation of the
325 First Amendment. This is censorship which does not belong in
326 America.

327 There was a time when my Republican colleagues would
328 have been up in arms over all this, when their allegiance to
329 the First Amendment was greater than their loyalty to one

330 man. But obviously, that is not the case anymore, and the
331 chairman's misdeeds do not end with his clear and dangerous
332 violations of the First Amendment. After months of delay,
333 Chairman Carr approved the Skydance-Paramount merger, only
334 after President Trump was paid \$16 million to settle a
335 meritless lawsuit, offered \$20 million in free advertising,
336 and received guarantees that CBS's editorial decisions would
337 be tweaked in his favor.

338 This is what we call a quid pro quo facilitated by
339 Chairman Carr, and that is why Representative Raskin and I
340 have opened an investigation into this merger's approval.
341 The American people deserve to know the truth and that some
342 of us in Washington still believe that billionaires should
343 have to play by the same rules as the rest of us.

344 Now, in sum, Chairman Carr has abandoned the FCC's role
345 as an independent agency, and has instead turned it into an
346 instrument for President Trump's own personal and political
347 benefit. In fact, during his testimony before the Senate he
348 openly stated that the FCC is no longer an independent agency
349 because the President says so. That is, in my opinion,
350 madness. And it makes clear that the FCC is no longer
351 operating in the public's interest. Quite the contrary,
352 right now the FCC is failing the American people and Chairman
353 Carr is failing his oath to the Constitution.

354 So while today's hearing is a good start, it is past

355 time that this committee hold a media hearing -- immediate
356 hearing so we can dig deeper into these and other matters.

357 So finally, let me say Chairman Carr's decision to
358 insert the FCC into policy debates where it has no authority
359 to act while walking away from congressional mandates and
360 existing FCC rules is also very disturbing. While President
361 Trump and Chairman Carr may wish that the FCC could preempt
362 state and local laws on artificial intelligence, Congress has
363 not given the agency that power. The FCC also does not have
364 the power to raise the 39 percent national TV ownership cap,
365 which can only be changed by Congress.

366 So, frankly, Americans deserve a lot better than this.
367 They deserve an FCC that upholds their constitutional rights,
368 that acts in their interests, not in the private interests of
369 the President.

370 [The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

371

372 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

373

374 *Mr. Pallone. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield
375 back.

376 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. We have now concluded with
377 member opening statements. The chair reminds members that,
378 pursuant to committee rules, all members' opening statements
379 will be made part of the record.

380 We would like to thank our witnesses for being here
381 today to testify before the subcommittee.

382 Our witnesses will have five minutes each to provide an
383 opening statement, which will be followed by a round of
384 questions from members.

385 The witnesses here before us today are Chairman Brendan
386 Carr, chairman of the FCC; Commissioner Anna Gomez,
387 commissioner at the FCC; and Commissioner Olivia Trusty,
388 commissioner at the FCC.

389 Chairman Carr, you are recognized for five minutes for
390 an opening statement.

391

392 STATEMENT OF THE HON. BRENDAN CARR, CHAIRMAN, FEDERAL
393 COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION; THE HON. ANNA GOMEZ, COMMISSIONER,
394 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION; AND THE HON. OLIVIA
395 TRUSTY, COMMISSIONER, FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

396

397 STATEMENT OF BRENDAN CARR

398

399 *Mr. Carr. Thank you. Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member
400 Matsui, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you
401 for the invitation to testify. While this is not my first
402 time appearing before the subcommittee, it is my first time
403 doing so as chairman. Like my colleagues, I have fond
404 memories of this room. I started as an intern here over 20
405 years ago now.

406 I also want to start by saying how proud I am of the
407 FCC's dedicated staff and everything they accomplished for
408 the American people last year. The FCC delivered an historic
409 set of wins in 2025, thanks to them.

410 I also want to applaud the important work that the
411 subcommittee has accomplished this Congress. For instance,
412 thanks to Chairman Hudson, Chairman Guthrie, and many of
413 their fellow members, the FCC's Spectrum Auction Authority
414 has now been restored through President Trump's Working
415 Families Tax Cut Act, a major legislative accomplishment.

416 In terms of the FCC's work, the agency has been

417 following President Trump's strong leadership and moved
418 quickly to execute on an ambitious set of reforms. We are
419 advancing a Build America agenda, a concrete plan to unleash
420 high-speed infrastructure builds in communities across the
421 country. We are reinvigorating the agency's consumer
422 protection work, including cracking down on illegal
423 robocalls. We are empowering broadcasters to meet their
424 public interest obligations, we are strengthening America's
425 national security, and we are eliminating waste while
426 modernizing agency operations.

427 Much of this represents a significant change from the
428 Biden Administration policies. Indeed, when I took over as
429 chairman of the FCC a year ago, the FCC faced several serious
430 challenges. For instance, the Biden Administration had
431 allowed the U.S. to fall behind when it comes to one of the
432 most important features of our economic strength national
433 security and connectivity goals: spectrum. The FCC Spectrum
434 Auction Authority had lapsed two years earlier. The Biden
435 Administration had failed to tee up a single new spectrum
436 band for auction, and President Biden's National Spectrum
437 Strategy committed to freeing up exactly zero megahertz of
438 spectrum.

439 On top of that, permitting reform was going nowhere.
440 The Biden Administration was layering on heavy-handed
441 regulations that only made it harder for broadband builders

442 to start turning dirt. To make matters worse, the Biden
443 Administration was pushing policies that would make services
444 more expensive for Americans. We had to turn things around,
445 and fast.

446 Thanks to President Trump's leadership, we are doing
447 exactly that. As I detail in my written testimony, the FCC's
448 build agenda focuses on unleashing the nation's broadband
449 builders. It does so by advancing several core goals. For
450 one, we are modernizing permitting rules and cutting red
451 tape. For another, we are freeing up the airwaves that are
452 necessary for America to lead the world again. We now have a
453 massive new spectrum pipeline, and are working on multiple
454 new spectrum auctions. In fact, the FCC just voted at the
455 end of last year on a plan to auction up to 180 megahertz of
456 spectrum in the upper C-band.

457 In the secondary markets we are now seeing large chunks
458 of spectrum move into the hands of competitors that can put
459 it to productive use quickly. Indeed, one carrier alone
460 announced that they built out spectrum they gained access to
461 late last year. That is over 23,000 cell sites in record
462 time, boosting 5G speeds by up to 80 percent.

463 In all of this, President Trump and the FCC are looking
464 out for America's blue collar workers. In this job I have
465 had the chance to climb towers, splice fiber, and string
466 lines with some of the country's most talented and hard-

467 working telecom workers, and also some members of this
468 committee, as well. So it is important to me that the FCC do
469 its part to strengthen the nation's telecom workforce. We
470 are already seeing changes. Providers are now adopting
471 faster payment cycles. They are closing loopholes that
472 allowed foreign fly-by-night groups to swoop in and undercut
473 U.S. workers, and they are improving safety.

474 Finally, the FCC is now pushing the largest deregulatory
475 effort in the agency's history. To date we have teed up for
476 removal over 1,000 rules. In all of this we are seeing good
477 results, including on affordability, where data just out
478 shows that prices for wireless plans are now down over four
479 percent since last January. I look forward to continuing to
480 work with all of my Commission colleagues and the agency
481 staff to deliver on this important agenda.

482 And in closing I want to thank you again for the
483 opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

484 [The prepared statement of Mr. Carr follows:]

485

486 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

487

488 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. Commissioner Gomez, you are
489 recognized for five minutes for your opening statement.

490

491 STATEMENT OF ANNA GOMEZ

492

493 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you. Chairman Guthrie, Ranking
494 Member Pallone, Chair Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, Vice
495 Chair Allen, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for
496 the opportunity to appear before you today.

497 It is worth stepping back and asking where the FCC has
498 been directing its energy. Too often that energy has gone
499 into culture war fights, rather than protecting consumers and
500 expanding access to reliable, affordable broadband. From my
501 perspective, the FCC has drifted from its mission in ways
502 that should concern this committee.

503 Let me begin with the First Amendment. For months this
504 FCC has asserted an apparent roving mandate to police speech
505 that this administration does not like, invoking an undefined
506 and unchecked concept known as the public interest standard.
507 This standard is being treated as a license to weigh in on
508 content, viewpoint, and editorial judgment. The FCC's job is
509 not to police content, root out media bias, or guarantee
510 favorable coverage for any administration. Its
511 responsibility is to regulate communications infrastructure
512 and markets, not censor the speech that flows through them.

513 Both the First Amendment and the Communications Act
514 protect against the FCC interfering with speech and engaging
515 in censorship. In a free society the government does not get
516 to decide what speech is acceptable or aligned with its
517 views. When the government's media regulator claims the
518 power to judge content or to police bias, we move away from
519 oversight and towards censorship and control. That is why it
520 is so important for the Commission to define what it means by
521 the public interest standard, something I have called on it
522 to do repeatedly. It is also why Congress must insist on
523 guardrails and protect against the FCC acting as an arbiter
524 of free speech.

525 I do want to acknowledge the Commission's continued
526 bipartisan work on robocalls, which remain the FCC's top
527 source of consumer complaints. But beyond that, we are
528 seeing the FCC retreat from core responsibilities that help
529 make communications more affordable, more transparent, and
530 more accessible.

531 Affordability is now one of the biggest barriers to
532 staying connected. Programs like the Affordable Connectivity
533 Program helped millions of households afford basic service.
534 When that support lapsed, the impact was immediate. Yet the
535 Commission has failed to treat that loss with the urgency it
536 demands. Instead, what we have seen is a clear pattern of
537 retreat from practical, consumer-focused initiatives. The

538 commission eliminated E-Rate support for school bus
539 connectivity and hotspot lending by schools and libraries.
540 For many students, seniors, and families, these programs were
541 the only reliable connection to the internet. Ending them
542 removed one of the most effective tools we had to help people
543 participate in the digital economy and to avoid being left
544 behind.

545 The Commission has rolled back limits on exorbitant
546 prison communication rates. These communications are often
547 the only way for those in prison to stay connected to the
548 support they need to return to society without turning back
549 to crime. Vulnerable families will now be paying higher
550 phone rates because of this FCC's actions.

551 The Commission has proposed weakening the broadband
552 nutrition labels it previously adopted, making it harder for
553 consumers to compare prices, speeds, and fees before they
554 sign up for service, and making it easier for prices to rise.

555 The Commission has stalled the cybersecurity trustmark
556 after years of bipartisan work, leaving consumers without a
557 practical tool in an increasingly risky digital marketplace.

558 And in a nation that is home to millions of non-English
559 speakers and that welcomes millions of international visitors
560 each year, the Commission has delayed bipartisan efforts to
561 provide consumers with multilingual emergency alerts. As we
562 prepare to host the World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, language

563 barriers should not become a public safety risk.

564 None of the policies this administration has sidelined
565 was symbolic. The rollback reflects a Commission spending
566 less time on consumer needs and more time on ideological
567 priorities and the needs of billion-dollar corporations.
568 Without sustained attention to affordability and consumer
569 protection, even the largest investments in broadband
570 deployment, including the BEAD program, risk becoming digital
571 bridges to nowhere. If students cannot afford broadband, if
572 families cannot trust the security of their devices, if
573 incarcerated individuals are cut off from support, and if
574 emergency alerts fail to reach whole communities, then no
575 amount of deregulatory policy will close that divide.

576 We should measure success from AI and other investments
577 in human outcomes: Who is connected? Who is protected? And
578 who is fully included? That is the standard that the FCC
579 should be held to, and the responsibility it must return to
580 if it is to fulfill its mission.

581 Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

582 [The prepared statement of Ms. Gomez follows:]

583

584 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

585

586 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you.

587 Commissioner Trusty, you are recognized for five minutes
588 for your opening statement.

589

590 STATEMENT OF OLIVIA TRUSTY

591

592 *Ms. Trusty. Thank you. Chairman Hudson, Ranking
593 Member Matsui, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for
594 the opportunity to appear before you today.

595 It has been six months since I was sworn in as a
596 commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission.
597 During that time I have focused on policies to advance access
598 to high-speed connectivity, strengthen the resilience of the
599 nation's communications networks, and restore U.S.
600 leadership in next generation communications technologies. A
601 critical part of that work has been the opportunity to travel
602 across the country and around the world to engage directly
603 with those who build, maintain, and rely on our
604 communications infrastructure and technologies. From
605 Jackson, Mississippi to Eek, Alaska and abroad, I have seen
606 firsthand how fixed, mobile, and satellite connectivity is
607 delivering on the promise of job creation, technological
608 innovation, and economic prosperity.

609 In Jackson, Mississippi I saw how broadband is
610 delivering quality, lifesaving care straight into the homes

611 of Mississippians across the Magnolia State. Doctors at the
612 University of Mississippi Medical Center are treating chronic
613 illnesses, managing high-risk pregnancies, and delivering
614 mental health care by video to rural communities that would
615 otherwise go without these essential services.

616 In Bethel and Eek, Alaska I saw how access to broadband
617 is transforming lives. These Alaskan towns are home to some
618 of the most rugged and hard-to-reach terrain, and broadband
619 is enabling Alaska Natives and non-Natives alike to
620 contribute to and benefit from the global digital economy
621 while maintaining their treasured culture and way of life.

622 And last fall I traveled to Baku, Azerbaijan to
623 represent the United States at the International
624 Telecommunication Union's World Telecommunication Development
625 Conference. There, ministers and regulators from around the
626 globe highlighted their progress on closing the digital
627 divide within their nation's borders. They also used this
628 forum to seek U.S. guidance and leadership on maximizing
629 spectrum efficiency, building trusted networks and secure
630 supply chains, and creating a regulatory environment that
631 invites continued innovation, investment, and competition
632 while protecting consumers and enhancing public safety.
633 These are issues we confront at the FCC in almost every
634 proceeding. They also inform the three priorities guiding my
635 work: universal connectivity, network resilience, and U.S.

636 leadership.

637 Ensuring that every American has access to
638 communications services has been the FCC's core mission since
639 its founding. In addition to the Universal Service Fund,
640 removing regulatory barriers that impede broadband deployment
641 is critical to connecting every American. I commend members
642 of this subcommittee for advancing several legislative
643 proposals to reform the permitting process which will help
644 accelerate the delivery of high-speed broadband services to
645 homes and businesses across the country.

646 In an era of growing digital hostility, however,
647 achieving universal connectivity requires increased focus on
648 the deployment of trusted and resilient network
649 infrastructure. Our communications networks are the backbone
650 of both our economy and our defense. From robocall scams to
651 foreign-made network components to infrastructure vandalism
652 and copper theft, the threats are evolving rapidly.

653 Recent Commission actions to remove foreign adversary-
654 owned labs from our equipment authorization process, to block
655 illegal robocalls from exploiting American consumers, and to
656 garner commitments from broadband providers to harden their
657 network infrastructure will enhance network integrity while
658 allowing us to maintain agility in responding to new and
659 emerging threats.

660 U.S. leadership in next generation technologies -- 6G,

661 AI, emerging commercial services in space, and more -- hinges
662 on our ability to deploy high-speed and resilient
663 communications infrastructure to every corner of the country.
664 Thanks to President Trump and members of this subcommittee,
665 the Commission's General Spectrum Auction Authority has been
666 restored, along with the creation of a long-term spectrum
667 pipeline. This positions America to lead in wireless
668 innovation and beyond. Our continued success in
669 technological advancement will ultimately be determined by a
670 domestic and international regulatory environment that
671 emphasizes innovation, competition, and global cooperation.

672 Importantly, U.S. leadership isn't inevitable. It must
673 be earned. I look forward to working with members of this
674 subcommittee, the full committee, and our interagency
675 partners to ensure that the United States is positioned to
676 capture first-mover advantages in technologies that will
677 define the future of our economic and national security.

678 Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to
679 testify, and I look forward to your questions.

680 [The prepared statement of Ms. Trusty follows:]

681

682 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

683

684 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you very much, and I would like to
685 take a moment of personal privilege and welcome someone I see
686 in the audience here, former chairman of this subcommittee
687 and the chairman of the full committee, Greg Walden.

688 Welcome back. Good to see you, sir.

689 We will now begin questioning, and I recognize myself
690 for five minutes.

691 Chairman Carr, for the United States to maintain its
692 leadership in wireless innovation, we need to make both
693 licensed and unlicensed spectrum available for commercial
694 use. Can you tell us why a balanced spectrum policy is so
695 important?

696 *Mr. Carr. Yes, U.S. leadership in wireless is part and
697 parcel of our geopolitical leadership. We need the full
698 toolkit out there, both licensed and unlicensed. In fact, on
699 the unlicensed side we are going to be voting at the FCC
700 later this month to supercharge WiFi so Americans get better,
701 faster, more powerful WiFi. I think it is a great complement
702 to the other work that we are already doing on the license
703 side.

704 *Mr. Hudson. I appreciate that.

705 Commissioner Trusty, do you have anything to add to
706 that?

707 *Ms. Trusty. Sure. Thank you for the question, and
708 thank you for your leadership on spectrum policy.

709 I have been a proponent of an all-of-the-above approach
710 to spectrum policy, where we can accommodate a variety of
711 users, use cases, and technologies. Our immediate priority
712 is the AWS-3 spectrum auction that will start in June, and we
713 are also working on rules for the upper C-band auction, which
714 will create opportunities for licensed spectrum.

715 But we also need more spectrum for unlicensed uses, so
716 -- to support WiFi and IoT-based applications. And we need
717 spectrum for satellite connectivity and space-based
718 applications. So I think that having licensed, unlicensed,
719 satellite spectrum is important for promoting innovation,
720 investment, and competition, and strengthening U.S.
721 leadership in next generation technologies.

722 *Mr. Hudson. I agree.

723 Chairman Carr, the White House recently released a
724 presidential memorandum on 6G. How does this action affect
725 your collaboration with NTIA on identifying additional bands
726 for auction?

727 *Mr. Carr. Well, thanks again to the work of you and
728 this committee and President Trump, we now have a real,
729 concrete spectrum pipeline, 800 megahertz. And as part of
730 that we are collaborating very closely with NTIA, with
731 Commerce, with the White House to make sure we are
732 identifying the right target bands, studying them, and
733 staying on track. And so that is a really good thing.

734 Again, we, as a country, we are behind a little bit on
735 3G, but we caught up on 4G. We caught up on 5G. And now
736 President Trump is making sure that the U.S. leads the way on
737 next generation technology, too.

738 *Mr. Hudson. Great. Chairman Carr, as I mentioned in
739 my opening statement, I am part of the bipartisan, bicameral
740 Universal Service Fund working group that is trying to
741 implement long-term reforms to ensure sustainability for USF
742 into the future. How does the USF ensure that broadband
743 remains affordable for all Americans?

744 *Mr. Carr. The Universal Service Fund has played a key
745 role over the years, ensuring connectivity for Americans all
746 across the country. We are doing work right now including
747 making sure that we are ending any unlawful expenditures that
748 were taking place. We are policing better for waste, fraud,
749 and abuse in these programs. We are going to work
750 collaboratively with the bipartisan, bicameral task force
751 that you talked about.

752 And more generally, on affordable, we are making some
753 really good progress here. Again, just recent data out,
754 wireless cell phone plans are down 4 percent since January
755 2025 alone. They are down over seven percent from Biden-era
756 highs. Right when we came into office we ended a Biden-era
757 plan that could have spiked the price of internet services
758 for Americans living in apartment buildings by, at least one

759 study, up to 50 percent. So there is a lot more work to go,
760 but I am glad that we are heading in the right direction.

761 *Mr. Hudson. Great. What reform ideas should Congress
762 consider, particularly on the distribution side, as we
763 evaluate the future of the USF?

764 *Mr. Carr. Well, one thing that is important I think
765 Congress is focusing on -- should focus on -- is technology
766 neutrality. You know, we want high-speed fiber connections
767 in so many parts of the country, but there is other places
768 where you are going to have fixed wireless or a new
769 generation of Low Earth Orbit satellite, or 5G or 6G. So we
770 want to do this in a way that makes sure that Americans get
771 the connectivity they expect and deserve, but we do it in the
772 most efficient way possible.

773 *Mr. Hudson. I agree. So public safety communications
774 is also a top priority of mine. It includes everything from
775 upgrading our 911 systems to NG911 to ensuring that we
776 quickly restore communications following a disaster. Again,
777 I appreciate your visit to western North Carolina and looking
778 at this issue. What are your top priorities in improving our
779 public safety communications?

780 *Mr. Carr. Well, look, your call to 911 absolutely
781 always has to go through. That is a system that we never
782 want to see fail. And we are taking a lot of steps to harden
783 that. We are working to collaborate across different

784 industry segments, including power and utility and telecom
785 crews so that when you rush into a place like western North
786 Carolina after Helene, that we are making progress and not
787 stepping on each other.

788 So we are encouraging that, and we are taking other
789 efforts to encourage this broader transition to all IP
790 networks, which, again, can really strengthen the resilience
791 and performance of the 911 and public safety system.

792 *Mr. Hudson. Great, and I appreciate that. My time is
793 getting very low, and I can't hold everybody accountable if I
794 go over. So I believe I will stop and recognize our ranking
795 member, Ms. Matsui, for five minutes for your questions.

796 *Ms. Matsui. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

797 The Trump Administration is weaponizing the FCC to
798 punish speech it doesn't like. A free press is supposed to
799 hold power accountable. Commissioner Gomez, President Trump
800 has threatened to revoke the licenses of NBC and ABC,
801 claiming they are biased and give him only bad publicity or
802 press. Yes or no, does the FCC have the power to take
803 licenses away from network affiliates solely for the content
804 of their news coverage?

805 *Ms. Gomez. No, they do not.

806 *Ms. Matsui. Okay. Chairman Carr has consistently used
807 the FCC's news distortion policy to justify investigating
808 broadcasters. Can you briefly describe the news distortion

809 policy, and whether, in your view, it allows the FCC to
810 revoke or not renew a broadcast license for perceived bias?

811 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

812 So the news distortion policy covers local broadcasters
813 broadcasting news -- a news about a significant event, but it
814 requires intentionality to mislead about a significant event,
815 not merely an incidental event. And it also cannot be used
816 if you just simply disagree with the content, and if it is
817 just an incidental mistake.

818 Now, the courts have looked at the constitutionality of
819 the doctrine, and what they have said is under the
820 constitutional scrutiny, because we are looking at deliberate
821 distortion and not just mere inaccuracy or a difference of
822 opinion, that it would uphold the constitutionality of the
823 news distortion policy. Under this FCC, however, we appear
824 to be using the news distortion policy to go after any
825 content that we don't like --

826 *Ms. Matsui. Okay.

827 *Ms. Gomez. -- and using that in conjunction with this
828 vague public interest standard.

829 *Ms. Matsui. Okay. Chairman Carr, the Communications
830 Act requires broadcasters to serve the public interest. Does
831 that standard allow the FCC to censor or interfere with
832 broadcasters' free speech under the First Amendment?

833 I just want a yes or no here.

834 *Mr. Carr. What the Supreme Court has said on this
835 issue is that "No one has a First Amendment right to a
836 license.'" So the FCC enforcing the public interest --

837 *Ms. Matsui. Okay.

838 *Mr. Carr. -- standard on broadcasters, according to
839 the Supreme Court, doesn't violate the First Amendment and
840 doesn't constitute --

841 *Ms. Matsui. So where do you come down?

842 *Mr. Carr. -- censorship --

843 *Ms. Matsui. Is it yes or no? Just -- I want to just
844 hear from you yes or no.

845 *Mr. Carr. I am sorry, could you repeat it?

846 *Ms. Matsui. Yes or no. I mean, just don't quote the
847 Supreme Court. Where are you, yes or no?

848 *Mr. Carr. Look, the FCC has an obligation to enforce
849 the public interest, and that is very unique --

850 *Ms. Matsui. Okay.

851 *Mr. Carr. -- as to broadcasters. Again, if you step
852 back, broadcasters --

853 *Ms. Matsui. Okay, okay.

854 *Mr. Carr. -- are unique among all other distributors
855 of news information --

856 *Ms. Matsui. Okay, reclaiming --

857 *Mr. Carr. -- a license.

858 *Ms. Matsui. I don't need a speech now. Does the

859 public interest include informing the public about what their
860 government, including ICE, is doing in their local community?
861 Yes or no?

862 *Mr. Carr. The core ingredient of the public interest
863 standard is to identify the needs of your local community,
864 and make sure you are meeting that.

865 *Ms. Matsui. Okay, so it is a yes, right?

866 *Mr. Carr. Broadcasters have an obligation to identify
867 and meet the needs of the local communities they serve.

868 *Ms. Matsui. Okay. When you talk about the public
869 interest, does the public include Americans who disagree with
870 the President? I just want a yes or no here.

871 *Mr. Carr. Does the public include people that disagree
872 with the President?

873 *Ms. Matsui. Who disagree --

874 *Mr. Carr. Yes.

875 *Ms. Matsui. -- with the President. When you talk
876 about public interest, does that include Americans who
877 disagree with the President? I just want a yes or no.

878 *Mr. Carr. Yes, the public includes people --

879 *Ms. Matsui. Okay.

880 *Mr. Carr. -- that disagrees with the President.

881 *Ms. Matsui. Okay. In 2021 you wrote that a newsroom's
882 decision about what stories to cover and how to frame them
883 should be beyond the reach of any government official. Do

884 you stand by that today? Yes or no?

885 *Mr. Carr. Yes, in that context there were members of
886 this committee that wrote letters to cable companies, which,
887 again, aren't broadcasters, no public interest obligation,
888 and they pressured those cable companies to drop cable
889 channels -- Fox News, OAN, and Newsmax -- because the members
890 of this committee described them as right-wing outlets.

891 *Ms. Matsui. Okay.

892 *Mr. Carr. I think when the Democrats on this committee
893 did that, it was wrong.

894 *Ms. Matsui. Okay. So to recap, we agree that
895 broadcasters are protected by the First Amendment. Is that
896 right?

897 *Mr. Carr. Yes.

898 *Ms. Matsui. The public interest includes informing
899 communities about government action. Correct?

900 And the FCC, a government agency, shouldn't influence
901 newsrooms' decisions. Correct?

902 Okay, so why did the FCC open an investigation to into
903 KCBS in San Francisco after it covered the January 26 ICE
904 raid in San Jose?

905 *Mr. Carr. The FCC, I believe, received either a
906 complaint or we heard concerns about that specific radio
907 station, and we have raised those concerns. I believe we
908 have heard back from that radio station, and we have nothing

909 new to share to update on that investigation.

910 *Ms. Matsui. Okay, okay.

911 *Mr. Hudson. That is time.

912 *Ms. Matsui. Excuse me, did I lose my time?

913 *Mr. Hudson. Yes.

914 *Ms. Matsui. Okay. It seems like --

915 *Mr. Hudson. Your time has expired.

916 *Ms. Matsui. All right. Thank you very much.

917 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
918 chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie, for five minutes
919 for your questions.

920 *The Chair. Thank you. Thank you for being here.

921 And so Chairman Carr, I appreciate your commitment to
922 meeting the 800 megahertz target established in the Working
923 Families Tax Cut. Can you talk about how the consumer
924 benefits that making spectrum more available for commercial
925 use brings to hard-working Americans, but focus on how it
926 will impact prices for hard-working Americans?

927 *Mr. Carr. Thank you very much for the question.

928 Prices, according to new data just out, on the wireless
929 side in particular, are already down over 4 percent from
930 January 2025 alone. And part of this is our work to make
931 more spectrum available both through auction and secondary
932 markets. When you introduce new spectrum into a market, the
933 data shows that it drives down prices for consumers

934 significantly. And so both in our work in the secondary
935 markets and our work in the upcoming auctions, pushing more
936 spectrum into the marketplace is going to be really good for
937 consumers.

938 *The Chair. Okay, thank you.

939 So Commissioner Trusty, the U.S. has led the world in
940 wireless innovation, including through unlicensed uses of
941 spectrum since -- WiFi is a great example of unlicensed. It
942 has changed the way people connect to the internet and led to
943 an ecosystem of new devices that we all rely upon. So could
944 you -- how can we foster -- how can we continue to foster
945 this innovation and investment to ensure the United States
946 continues to lead the world in wireless?

947 *Ms. Trusty. Sure, thank you for the question and thank
948 you for your leadership in spectrum policy.

949 Because we have the spectrum provisions in the Working
950 Families Tax Cut Act, that gives us the foundation we need to
951 lead the world in wireless. And so to build on that we need
952 to maintain predictability in our spectrum policy. So to
953 continue to have auction authority and a long-term spectrum
954 pipeline, we need to be leading in international standards-
955 setting bodies. We also need to maintain strong interagency
956 coordination. And I think we need to be investing in
957 artificial intelligence so that we can increase spectrum
958 efficiency. And I think AI will define the future of things

959 like 6G, AI native networks, and capabilities like integrated
960 sensing and communications.

961 And to build on that, I also think we need to continue
962 to build trusted and secure infrastructure and develop
963 coalitions with our international partners and allies so that
964 our preferred technologies and standards achieve
965 harmonization and scale. I think all of those things will
966 position us well to lead in wireless innovation.

967 *The Chair. Okay, thank you, and welcome back to the
968 committee. I hope you are enjoying it from that side.

969 *Ms. Trusty. Thank you, sir.

970 *The Chair. And I enjoyed working with my -- the
971 ranking member of this subcommittee. We still work together,
972 Ranking Member Matsui, on spectrum policy. That has been a
973 good, good work for us.

974 And so Chairman Carr, could you speak to the importance
975 of media modernization, and why it is critical to remove
976 outdated regulations for incumbent industries to allow them
977 to better compete with big tech?

978 *Mr. Carr. Well, one of the main concerns I have with
979 respect to media policy is you have, on the one hand, all
980 these individual licensed local TV stations. On the other
981 hand, you have these national programmers: Disney, Comcast,
982 a handful of others. And over the years, historically, we
983 had a balance between the national programmers and the

984 licensed local TV stations.

985 But recently what we have seen is those national
986 programmers have just consolidated and amassed a massive
987 amount of power, and we are losing that balance between the
988 programmers and the actual local TV stations. In some cases
989 they are becoming just a mouthpiece for programing being
990 produced by those national programmers.

991 So the thing that we are trying to push the hardest on
992 our media policies is to re-empower those local TV stations
993 to compete in this modern media marketplace.

994 *The Chair. Okay, thank you. And also, Chairman Carr,
995 space is expected to dominate the accompanying -- upcoming
996 World Radio Communications conference. I think Commissioner
997 Gomez told me yesterday she was very -- she has been very
998 involved in the radio communications conferences.

999 I am deeply concerned about what China and Russia are
1000 doing in space. And that being said, our friends across the
1001 Atlantic have been making it difficult for the American
1002 companies to operate in the European market. Chairman Carr,
1003 from your perspective, how do we posture the U.S. for
1004 success?

1005 And do you think there is still room for partnership
1006 with our partners in Europe?

1007 *Mr. Carr. One thing I give credit to my predecessor,
1008 Chairwoman Rosenworcel, honestly, she stood up a new space

1009 bureau inside the FCC. And one thing that we are doing is
1010 really supercharging those efforts there. Right when I came
1011 in, we cleared out over half of the backlogs that had been
1012 there. We recently approved a next generation constellation
1013 into Low Earth Orbit, and we did that in roughly half the
1014 time that it had taken the FCC to approve the prior updated
1015 constellation.

1016 And so, as you point out, China wants to dominate in Low
1017 Earth Orbit and up and down all orbital slots --

1018 *The Chair. I have about 30 seconds. So what -- in
1019 this area, what can the committee do to help? Is there a
1020 legislative need for you, or what can we do to help you?

1021 *Mr. Carr. You know, the FCC needs to continue to move
1022 faster in this space, and legislative efforts to help lock
1023 that in would be a good thing.

1024 *The Chair. Okay, thank you.

1025 I have 15 seconds left and I will yield them back.

1026 *Mr. Hudson. I appreciate that, Chairman. The chair
1027 now recognizes the ranking member of the full committee, Mr.
1028 Pallone, for five minutes for your questions.

1029 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

1030 Chairman Carr, I did want to get into the local
1031 broadcasters that you mentioned, but just as simple yes or no
1032 initially. You recently stated that the FCC is not an
1033 independent agency. True? Yes or no.

1034 *Mr. Carr. I said the FCC is not, formally speaking, an
1035 independent agency, yes.

1036 *Mr. Pallone. Okay. But to me, that is very much
1037 contradictory to what you said in 2022 when you testified
1038 before this very subcommittee and you made it clear that
1039 Congress made the decision that the FCC is truly independent,
1040 not the president, and certainly not you, that it is an
1041 independent agency. So I think you, you know, you are kind
1042 of hedging a little bit when you say that you think it is an
1043 independent agency, because I think you have repeatedly said
1044 that it is not. But whatever. Let me get to Commissioner
1045 Gomez.

1046 Can you discuss the importance of the FCC's independence
1047 from political interference, if you will?

1048 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for your question.

1049 Congress set up the FCC as an independent agency because
1050 it feared that the agency should not be subject to the whims
1051 of one person or one political party. That is why we have a
1052 independent, multi-member, expert body that regulates our
1053 communications medium.

1054 So when we declare that we are not independent, what we
1055 are doing is, A, we are not recognizing what Congress wanted
1056 when it created the -- this independent agency, but we are
1057 also putting way too much power into one person and then
1058 doing their political whims.

1059 *Mr. Pallone. I appreciate that, and I do think,
1060 Chairman Carr, that you don't -- you know, your repeated
1061 comments do not suggest that you think it is an independent
1062 agency. But I don't want to get into all the details because
1063 I do want to get to this local broadcaster issue which you
1064 mentioned before, because I think local broadcasters are some
1065 of the most powerful voices shaping public opinion at the
1066 local level. And the FCC has adopted and enforced ownership
1067 restrictions to ensure the needs of local communities are
1068 met, and that is why I have concerns with any further
1069 relaxation of that ownership.

1070 And I also want to remind you that Congress set the
1071 maximum reach for entities owning TV stations at 39 percent
1072 of national television audience households, and I -- only
1073 Congress can change that threshold. So let me ask you,
1074 Chairman, do you agree that only Congress has the authority
1075 to raise the national ownership cap?

1076 *Mr. Carr. The position of the FCC consistently over
1077 the prior four chairs, Republican and Democrats alike, has
1078 always been that the 39 percent cap is a rule that the FCC
1079 has on our code of regulations. And as a general matter, I
1080 really agree with you on the need to reinvigorate --

1081 *Mr. Pallone. Right.

1082 *Mr. Carr. -- the local broadcasters.

1083 *Mr. Pallone. But you are saying, then, that you don't

1084 think -- you think you can raise it on your own, the
1085 Commission can.

1086 *Mr. Carr. These are issues that we are looking at
1087 right now. I am just saying --

1088 *Mr. Pallone. Well, I mean, yes or no, you believe that
1089 you can raise the cap on your own. You are saying it is a
1090 regulation, not a statute?

1091 *Mr. Carr. We are looking at that right now. I am
1092 saying that if you look at the last, you know, four FCC
1093 chairs across Republican and Democrat, the FCC has
1094 consistently been --

1095 *Mr. Pallone. Well, I don't think you are answering my
1096 question, but let -- again, let me move on.

1097 Commissioner Gomez, do you agree with Chairman Carr?

1098 And, well, I guess he didn't really say anything, so let
1099 me ask you, what impact do you think any relaxation of this
1100 39 percent would have on consumers?

1101 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

1102 So yes, the 39 percent ownership cap is, in fact, in the
1103 statute. The Congress amended the Communications Act when it
1104 imposed the 39 percent ownership cap. So I don't think that
1105 we have the authority to waive that. It is not just a rule.
1106 Rules are how we implement the Act.

1107 I believe consolidation is worrisome. I travel all over
1108 the country and I meet with local broadcasters, and I am

1109 always so impressed with their commitment to their
1110 communities and to serving their communities. What I fear is
1111 that this consolidation is going to enable behemoth corporate
1112 parents to take those local broadcasters and to create
1113 "efficiencies" that will, in fact, water down local news and
1114 then lead to less service for their communities, not more.

1115 *Mr. Pallone. Well, thank you. Let me -- one more
1116 question.

1117 There has been a lot of discussion with the chairman
1118 about the public interest or the public interest standard,
1119 but I really believe that under Chairman Carr's leadership
1120 the FCC has really not served the public interest, but rather
1121 the personal or political interests of President Trump. So
1122 let me ask you, Commissioner Gomez, has the FCC under Chair
1123 Carr's leadership been guided by the public interest
1124 standard, as you would expect, especially when it echoes
1125 President Trump's threats to take away broadcast licenses for
1126 merely criticizing him? How is that in the public interest?

1127 *Ms. Gomez. Fundamentally, it is important to note that
1128 we are subject to the First Amendment and to the
1129 Communications Act prohibition on censorship. We cannot use
1130 this vague and undefined and unchecked term, "the public
1131 interest," in order to go after any content we don't like.
1132 What we are seeing on this -- under this administration is
1133 retaliation against speech and reporting that this

1134 administration doesn't want in order to get coverage that
1135 this administration wants. That is not a good use of the
1136 public interest standard, and we need to define what we mean
1137 by that.

1138 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

1139 *Mr. Pallone. Thank you.

1140 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1141 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentleman. The chair now
1142 recognizes the vice chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Allen,
1143 for five minutes for your questions.

1144 *Mr. Allen. Thank you, Chairman Hudson, and also
1145 Chairman Carr and other members of the Commission for being
1146 here today and -- anyway, thank you for your service. It is
1147 great, even under the duress that you are dealing with, but -
1148 - which I really apologize for.

1149 But anyway Chairman Carr, last March 73 Members of
1150 Congress, including myself, sent a letter to your Commission
1151 calling for immediate action to update outdated ownership
1152 regulations. Our letter emphasized the need for rules that
1153 reflect today's competitive media landscape, where local
1154 broadcasters face unprecedented challenges competing with the
1155 unregulated big tech platforms. Could you provide us with a
1156 status update on this issue?

1157 And as I understand it, with the local broadcasters, it
1158 is a matter of survival. I mean, this is a real problem.

1159 Could you update us on that?

1160 *Mr. Carr. Yes. Thank you, Congressman, for the
1161 question and for your leadership on this issue.

1162 The FCC has a couple of active proceedings underway
1163 where we are looking at this. Again, my, you know, North
1164 Star through all this media policy is I am not interested in
1165 seeing the national programmers, Disney and Comcast, amass
1166 any more power than they already have. I think one thing
1167 that we have to try to look at, whether it is this proceeding
1168 or otherwise, is how do we create some better structural
1169 competition to them because, to your point, if you look at
1170 local news right now, it is principally being driven by local
1171 broadcasters. We used to have thousands of local newspapers
1172 across the country. I know in your experience, you are
1173 seeing them close down or at least stop physically printing
1174 by the dozen.

1175 What I don't want to see, and I think the conversation
1176 that we should have in Congress, is if we care about local
1177 news and local reporting, how do we make sure that those
1178 local TV stations continue to be economically viable because
1179 we don't want them to go the way of so many newspapers. I
1180 don't think we would be better off as a country if we lost
1181 them.

1182 *Mr. Allen. And, you know, again, it is run by local
1183 folks who live in the community, who work in the community,

1184 who contribute to the community. And I don't see how being
1185 part of a bigger organization to survive, you know, the
1186 current turmoil, if you would say, in this industry and
1187 expansion in this industry is -- I think it is, you know, I
1188 think it is important that we have that local influence.

1189 You have made empowering local broadcasters a
1190 centerpiece of your agenda. One such way has been your
1191 oversight of retransmission consent fees, ensuring that they
1192 are used as Congress intended. That is, by local
1193 broadcasters for a program that serves the local community.
1194 Can you update us on your oversight of the retransmission
1195 consent regime, and explain why this is so important?

1196 *Mr. Carr. Well, one issue that we are looking at is
1197 those agreements, the affiliate agreements between the local
1198 TV stations on the one hand and those national programs on
1199 the other. We are looking at lots of different ways to help
1200 empower that.

1201 Retrans is a very complex issue. On the one hand, we
1202 are seeing declining revenues at a lot of local TV stations.
1203 At the same time, the national programmers will say they need
1204 to maintain scale themselves to continue to compete for
1205 expensive sports rights. And so we have to try to find a
1206 right balance between having the financial capability of
1207 local TV stations to invest in local news and reporting, but
1208 also making sure that they have, you know, the national

1209 sports rights that people expect and demand. So it is a
1210 complex issue, but we are looking at it.

1211 *Mr. Allen. Yes, yes, there is nothing worse than
1212 having the national championship and then all of a sudden you
1213 find out, oh, I can't get it on my television, yes.

1214 But we know that in 2027 China will host the next World
1215 Radio Conference, an international conference that will set
1216 global rules for using spectrum. Under the last
1217 administration domestic disputes between Federal agencies
1218 about how spectrum should be used sidelined the United States
1219 and allowed other countries to pick the spectrum bands for
1220 next generation networks. As a result, the United States now
1221 trails the world on mid-band spectrum for wireless broadband.

1222 What does the United States need to do to ensure it is
1223 ready for the next World Radio Conference?

1224 How can we ensure that the United States, and not China,
1225 is driving global spectrum focus at this conference?

1226 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman. I think you are
1227 right. If you look back at past radio conferences, there was
1228 some gaps between different Federal agencies in terms of
1229 their positions. That doesn't put us on the strongest
1230 possible footing.

1231 You know, thankfully, President Trump has been very
1232 clear to every agency that the United States is going to lead
1233 the world in next generation technology, and that has

1234 resulted in a lot of close collaboration from the FCC, NTIA,
1235 Commerce, the White House, and hopefully, you know, we
1236 continue to make a very strong, unified position because we
1237 know China and others are going to be very unified going into
1238 that, and so we need a strong U.S. position, as well.

1239 *Mr. Allen. Good, great.

1240 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

1241 *Mr. Allen. Yes. Thank you for your service.

1242 And I yield back.

1243 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
1244 gentleman from Florida, Mr. Soto, for five minutes for your
1245 questions.

1246 *Mr. Soto. Thank you, Chairman.

1247 President Trump has the most corrupt administration in
1248 modern history: a \$2 billion cryptocurrency scandal, pay-to-
1249 play pardons, pardoning January 6 insurrectionists, an
1250 Epstein pedophile cover-up, White House ballrooms that are
1251 lavish, and the Trump family getting rich off of official
1252 U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and
1253 beyond. And when the national media like CBS, ABC, and NBC
1254 cover these egregious scandals or use satire, FCC Chairman
1255 Brendan Carr tried to crush them using his power as FCC
1256 chairman.

1257 CBS covers the cryptocurrency corruption, pardon of the
1258 Binance founder. Then CBS is forced to install a bias

1259 monitor. Two days after the merger approval, under pressure
1260 from Carr and Trump, along with an extortion payment of \$16
1261 million. ABC's Jimmy Kimmel uses satire to criticize Trump.
1262 Carr threatens their license. NBC's Seth Meyers uses satire
1263 to criticize Trump. Chairman Carr echoes Trump's call for
1264 Meyers's ouster.

1265 Chairman, you have turned the FCC into Trump's attack
1266 dog to crush First Amendment rights through FCC extortion.
1267 The Chinese Communist Party would be impressed. There was a
1268 time when you passionately defended First Amendment rights.
1269 In fact, you and I tangoed over COVID and issues related to
1270 that. So how do you justify using the FCC to censor news and
1271 satire of Trump's rampant corruption?

1272 *Mr. Carr. Broadcasters have an obligation to operate
1273 in the public interest, and in 2021 --

1274 *Mr. Soto. Is it not the public interest --

1275 *Mr. Carr. -- wrote this letter right here to the FCC,
1276 asking us to take action when there was a transaction pending
1277 at the FCC involving a Spanish language radio station in
1278 south Florida.

1279 *Mr. Soto. Is it not in the public interest --

1280 *Mr. Carr. You talk about disinformation and pressuring
1281 the FCC --

1282 *Mr. Soto. -- for people to know about the corruption
1283 that is happening in this administration?

1284 *Mr. Carr. -- and then Democrats step in and say, to
1285 win in 2022, this must stop, pressuring the FCC to block a
1286 sale because Democrats thought it would be bad for their --

1287 *Mr. Soto. Reclaiming my time, you serve the American
1288 people.

1289 *Mr. Carr. And after that --

1290 *Mr. Soto. What is at issue --

1291 *Mr. Carr. -- go through.

1292 *Mr. Soto. -- is blatant corruption by the Trump
1293 Administration, and you trying to hide it, and everybody
1294 knows it.

1295 Commissioner Gomez, one day Chairman Carr's reign of un-
1296 American censorship will be over. How do we restore public
1297 confidence in the FCC after this national censorship scandal?

1298 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

1299 I think Congress can really help us here by putting
1300 guardrails on the FCC so that it cannot violate the First
1301 Amendment and censor content on broadcasters.

1302 *Mr. Soto. And what do you think those guardrails
1303 should be?

1304 *Ms. Gomez. I think defining the public -- what it
1305 means to serve in the public interest would be very helpful.

1306 *Mr. Soto. Do you think highlighting corruption is in
1307 the public interest?

1308 *Ms. Gomez. I think the FCC should stay out of content,

1309 whether we like it or not. And that is the problem, is this
1310 administration wants to retaliate against news organizations
1311 that have the temerity to report factually about this
1312 administration.

1313 *Mr. Soto. Well, the history books will not be kind to
1314 that.

1315 It has been over a year since Trump took office, and we
1316 still don't have rural broadband in rural communities like
1317 mine and others. You came to my district a while back in
1318 Orlando to hear from veterans who utilize internet to help
1319 with their health care. What has the effect been of the BEAD
1320 program still not being rolled out across America with regard
1321 to consumers?

1322 *Ms. Gomez. Yes, it is so important for us to be able
1323 to participate in this economy today, the digital economy, to
1324 have access to affordable broadband. And the communities
1325 that don't have that are getting further and further left
1326 behind.

1327 And as you know, when we came we were talking about the
1328 Affordable Connectivity Program, and how important that was
1329 to veterans to be able to make their meetings and their
1330 health care appointments without having to, in fact, travel.
1331 It saved them days of painful travel. So we need to focus on
1332 this issue so that every American can have access to
1333 affordable and accessible broadband, especially if we want to

1334 be world leaders in artificial intelligence.

1335 *Mr. Soto. And --

1336 *Ms. Gomez. It is so important.

1337 *Mr. Soto. And what happens to rural businesses, farms,
1338 ranches when they don't have access to high-speed broadband?

1339 *Ms. Gomez. If you don't have access to high-speed
1340 broadband, you really are at risk of being left behind. It
1341 is an imperative in today's economy, in this digital economy,
1342 to have access to broadband.

1343 *Mr. Soto. Thanks, Chairman, I yield back.

1344 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentleman. The chair now
1345 recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Latta, for --

1346 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you --

1347 *Mr. Hudson. -- five minutes for your questions.

1348 *Mr. Latta. -- Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the
1349 Commission for being with us today, Chairman Carr,
1350 Commissioner Gomez, and Commissioner Trusty, and
1351 congratulations. It is great since you have been in my
1352 office years back to follow your career. Congratulations.
1353 Chairman Carr, to start off with the BEAD program, how
1354 much shovels in the ground were there in the Biden
1355 Administration?

1356 *Mr. Carr. The BEAD program was President Biden's \$42
1357 billion plan to connect millions of Americans to high-speed
1358 internet. And after over 1,000 days of the Biden

1359 Administration implementing it, not a single shovel's worth
1360 of dirt was turned.

1361 Now, President Trump and Secretary Lutnick and NTIA
1362 Administrator Roth have come in, and they have turned that
1363 program around, and we are finally going to be seeing dirt
1364 turning and Americans getting connected.

1365 *Mr. Latta. So I just want to make sure I heard that
1366 correctly. Nothing happened in the Biden Administration.

1367 Let me turn to another topic I know that you and I
1368 talked about through the years, especially when we had this
1369 spectrum authority auction lapse, you know, because how far
1370 did we fall behind in this country when we didn't have that
1371 authority to sell spectrum?

1372 And the other question I would like to ask is this,
1373 because it is always one of the things we always worry about:
1374 How much money did we lose in that timeframe from not being
1375 able to have that auction authority?

1376 *Mr. Carr. Yes, during the Biden Administration the
1377 FCC's Spectrum Auction Authority lapsed for the very first
1378 time ever, and that enabled other countries, China and
1379 others, to leapfrog the United States. We fell several
1380 hundred megahertz behind them. But thankfully, this Congress
1381 came together, President Trump came together and passed a
1382 Working Families Tax Cut that created a strong pipeline of
1383 800 megahertz.

1384 And again, every time you bring spectrum online, that
1385 drives down prices for consumers, and so that is what we are
1386 doing right now.

1387 *Mr. Latta. So if I understood that correctly, it was
1388 during the Biden Administration that authority lapsed.

1389 Let me ask you another question, because this just came
1390 in. I know that we talked about this three years, and I
1391 worked on legislation on robocalls and trying to protect the
1392 public out there. What is that -- and I know that in reading
1393 your testimony that the Commission wants to move forward and
1394 make sure that we protect people out there from these
1395 robocalls that people are getting.

1396 *Mr. Carr. Well, thank you.

1397 Robocalls, obviously, are our number-one consumer
1398 complaint. And right now we are building on the long-term
1399 bipartisan work of the agency on this. One thing we are
1400 doing is historically the FCC would focus on a very small
1401 number of robocalls that generated a lot of calls, and they
1402 would fine them hundreds of millions of dollars, but those
1403 fines would largely go uncollected. And what we are doing
1404 now is we are picking up on something we did in the last
1405 administration, which is to kick providers out of our
1406 robocall mitigation database if they are not doing enough to
1407 fight illegal robocalls, and that effectively cuts them off
1408 from the U.S. telephone network.

1409 And more generally, we are going at every single portion
1410 of the life cycle of illegal robocalls, and making it harder
1411 for the bad actors to get their calls through, including we
1412 are looking particularly at foreign-originated illegal
1413 robocalls.

1414 *Mr. Latta. Well, I know the American public out there
1415 is going to appreciate your work on that, because I know I
1416 just got a call the other day from a constituent that had
1417 problems with robocalls coming into their business.

1418 Commissioner Trusty, you know where I am from and what
1419 our -- my area looks like. And there is areas out there, of
1420 course, that we don't have broadband. And I know I worked
1421 years back making sure that we had accurate maps before we
1422 would spend money to make sure that dollars were spent. In
1423 your testimony you talk about some of the things you are
1424 really focusing on, and one of the things I think is really
1425 important you talk about is when we are talking about rural
1426 health care and telehealth. And I know when I am in my rural
1427 hospitals, they can't afford to have a lot of different
1428 programs you might see or docs doing certain procedures, or
1429 especially on the mental health side. Could you just
1430 elaborate a little bit on the mental health side and the
1431 telehealth side?

1432 *Ms. Trusty. Absolutely. Thank you so much for the
1433 question.

1434 As you know, the rural health care program ensures that
1435 rural patients have access to modern quality health care,
1436 including telehealth. And the FCC has made some process
1437 improvements to improve access to this essential program by
1438 extending the application deadline, by making sure funding
1439 aligns with demands. And we have been able to roll over
1440 unused funds for this year -- or for 2025 -- to ensure that
1441 we increase access to this important service.

1442 I think as part of the USF congressional working group
1443 there is another opportunity to explore additional reforms
1444 that can be made to this program to ensure that Americans in
1445 rural communities across the country have access to the
1446 quality care that they need.

1447 *Mr. Latta. Well, thank you.

1448 If I could just return to you, Commissioner Carr, just
1449 real quickly, because we had discussions when we talked about
1450 4G, 5G, 6G, and I would always ask this question. Are we
1451 winning the race? And you know, who is our competitor out
1452 there? We got to win this race. So are we winning this race
1453 out there when we talk about 6G?

1454 *Mr. Carr. We are. We had fallen behind, in my view,
1455 during the Biden years, and now we have hit the accelerator
1456 and we are going to be leading the world once again in next
1457 generation technology.

1458 *Mr. Latta. Thank you very much.

1459 My time has expired, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

1460 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
1461 representative of New York, Ms. Clarke, for five minutes for
1462 your questions.

1463 *Ms. Clarke. Good morning, and thank you, Chairman
1464 Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, for convening this hearing.
1465 Given the actions of the FCC under Chairman Carr, it is long
1466 overdue.

1467 Less than one year into his tenure, the FCC under
1468 Chairman Carr has given this committee many worthy avenues of
1469 exploration and oversight, most of which appear to stem from
1470 his new role as an obsequious, partisan fulfilling President
1471 Trump's desire to exact revenge on his perceived enemies and
1472 line the pockets of the oligarch class.

1473 While appearing before this committee less than four
1474 years ago under the Biden Administration, then-Commissioner
1475 Carr rightly acknowledged the independence of the FCC, free
1476 from executive branch interference, but recently made clear
1477 that under the Trump Administration that independence is
1478 gone. While this may seem like a shocking about-face, it
1479 shouldn't be that surprising, given Mr. Carr's role as author
1480 of the horrific Project 2025 manifesto, as well as the
1481 frankly bizarre choice to wear golden lapel pin bearing
1482 President Trump's face.

1483 The weaponization of the FCC under Chairman Carr is not

1484 just frustrating, but dangerous, dangerous for the nation and
1485 the ideals upon which it was founded. Individuals' freedom
1486 of speech and a press corps free from political intimidation
1487 are vital to a democracy. It is what also allows informed
1488 citizens to speak their minds without fear of government
1489 reprisal, and serves as an important check on those in power.
1490 Unfortunately, these ideals are lost under this iteration of
1491 the FCC, which appears bound to the whims of a president
1492 intent on punishing those who report accurately on his
1493 unsettling behavior.

1494 Because my time is limited, I can't possibly list every
1495 example of the weaponization of the FCC in the last year, but
1496 a few that come to mind include reinstating complaints
1497 against news organizations that were critical of Trump during
1498 the election, while failing to reinstate a petition filed
1499 against the President's media outlet of choice, Fox; ordering
1500 baseless investigations into NPR and PBS; using mergers to
1501 extract political revenge; and more, such as withholding
1502 approval of the Paramount-Skydance merger until Trump's
1503 personal lawsuit was settled with financial payment;
1504 launching a ridiculous investigation into KCBS in San Jose
1505 for merely reporting on ICE activity in their own community;
1506 threatening to unilaterally alter national media ownership
1507 limits, which would reduce diversity in media and further
1508 endanger local news; overtly partisan reinterpretations of

1509 the FCC's public interest standard and news distortion
1510 policies to enact a regime of censorship; and most notably,
1511 the overt threatening of licenses of broadcasters for
1512 carrying Jimmy Kimmel Live show.

1513 To the last point, Senator Cruz, who I rarely agree
1514 with, aptly described Chairman Carr's threats as akin to
1515 something out of a mafia movie. And let me just say I don't
1516 see any Michael Corleones in this room today. Only Alfredo.

1517 So my question is to Commissioner Gomez. For nearly 90
1518 years, the FCC has functioned as an independent agency to
1519 insulate communications policy from political pressure. Can
1520 you explain why the FCC's independence is essential to its
1521 credibility and effectiveness, and what potential risks arise
1522 as that independence is eroded?

1523 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

1524 You know, when Congress created our predecessor, the
1525 Federal Radio Commission, it considered putting the
1526 Commission under the Department of Commerce. And Herbert
1527 Hoover at the time said it was a terrible idea because it was
1528 dangerous to have the regulator of the most important
1529 communications medium at the time being overseen by a single
1530 person, and so that is why it created an independent agency.

1531 It is important to have an independent agency because we
1532 must be seen as an expert body that makes decisions based on
1533 that expertise and not based on the political whims of one

1534 administration.

1535 *Ms. Clarke. Commissioner Gomez, how do FCC media
1536 ownership caps support diversity of viewpoints and locally-
1537 focused news?

1538 And what do communities risk losing if these limits are
1539 weakened?

1540 *Ms. Gomez. Our core principles when we talk about the
1541 public interest in local broadcasting are localism, diversity
1542 of viewpoints, and competition. The caps ensure that we have
1543 multiple voices in every market. That is why we have them.
1544 We want to ensure that we have that. If we lose those caps,
1545 what we are going to lose is that diversity of viewpoints,
1546 and we risk having one voice funneling all the information to
1547 our voters.

1548 *Ms. Clarke. With that I yield back.

1549 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentlelady. The chair now
1550 recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Bilirakis, for
1551 five minutes for your questions.

1552 *Mr. Bilirakis. Thank you very much. My questions are
1553 for Chairman Carr.

1554 In addition to serving on the Energy and Commerce
1555 Committee, I am a member of the Select Committee on China.
1556 Under that role I recently led a letter with Chairman
1557 Moolenaar to your office regarding specific concerns about
1558 Chinese fiber technology entering our country and the

1559 security concerns it brings to the United States.

1560 The FCC and Congress has already done a great job to
1561 protect our networks from these threats, but the concern
1562 remains. Just last week the Financial Times reported a new
1563 China-backed hack of congressional staff email accounts. Can
1564 you outline, Mr. Chairman, what actions you are continuing to
1565 take to identify and address adversarial threats to U.S.
1566 telecommunications infrastructure?

1567 And can you confirm that you will continue -- again,
1568 have all the necessary tools at your disposal to adequately
1569 address these concerns without additional congressional
1570 approvals?

1571 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman, for the question,
1572 for your leadership on this important issue.

1573 So one of the very first things I did as chair was to
1574 stand up within the FCC a new Council on National Security
1575 that brings together all of our bureaus and offices and their
1576 expertise to bear on this issue because China and other
1577 foreign actors are constantly poking and prodding and finding
1578 -- looking for ways into our communications network. We have
1579 taken actions on what we call bad labs to try to kick out
1580 equipment authorization bodies that aren't trustworthy. We
1581 have taken action to implement the Secure Equipment Act, and
1582 with cybersecurity in particular we worked directly with
1583 carriers to ensure that they are taking renewed actions to

1584 accelerate the patching of vulnerable equipment, updating and
1585 reviewing their access controls, disabling unnecessary
1586 outbound connections.

1587 And the key to this is we have to be very, very nimble
1588 and make sure that carriers and our country's national
1589 security expertise, including CISA and DHS, are very closely
1590 collaborating because you need very quick reactions, given
1591 the types of threats we are seeing.

1592 *Mr. Bilirakis. Very good. Again, a question for the
1593 chairman.

1594 In your written testimony you devote a section to the
1595 deregulatory actions the FCC has engaged in under your
1596 leadership. This includes removal of over 1,100 rules and
1597 regulations. I applaud these actions, especially as this
1598 committee is working on its own permitting reform package to
1599 streamline the process. Beyond the baseline number of
1600 regulations removed, is there any way to quantify how much
1601 time and/or money is saved by these actions?

1602 How would you describe these changes to the typical
1603 American taxpayer and internet user? I think that is very
1604 important.

1605 *Mr. Carr. We --

1606 *Mr. Bilirakis. If you could respond, I would
1607 appreciate it.

1608 *Mr. Carr. Yes, thank you, Congressman. The easiest

1609 way to put it is that it historically just -- it costs too
1610 much and it takes too long to build out internet
1611 infrastructure in this country. And that means communities
1612 that are on the edge case of new or additional or better
1613 service can get left behind. And so we are working hard at
1614 the FCC on permitting reform and cutting red tape, and that
1615 is going to be key to making sure that we keep driving down
1616 prices for Americans.

1617 *Mr. Bilirakis. Very good. For the last several weeks
1618 the news has been inundated with the discovery of mass
1619 amounts of fraud within our Federal programs. What are the
1620 safeguards at the FCC to help guard against fraud?

1621 And in light of what is happening with the improper
1622 payments within other agencies, is this something you are
1623 considering taking a look at and updating?

1624 *Mr. Carr. We are in the midst of continuing to
1625 reinvigorate our work to detect and root out waste, fraud,
1626 and abuse. Just recently we took action, for instance, with
1627 respect to California. California had a state Lifeline
1628 program that had decided that they were going to stop sharing
1629 relevant information with certain Federal agencies, and that
1630 opened the door to potential waste, fraud, and abuse. So we
1631 revoked California's ability to opt out of that program, and
1632 now we are putting everybody through this national database.

1633 We are also finalizing some work right now on some

1634 additional steps that we can take with respect to our
1635 Lifeline program to make sure that those benefits are flowing
1636 only to those Americans that Congress intended them to.

1637 *Mr. Bilirakis. Very good. Thank you very much.

1638 And now I yield back.

1639 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentleman. The chair now
1640 recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Peters, for
1641 five minutes for your questions.

1642 *Mr. Peters. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this
1643 important oversight hearing.

1644 In 2021 Congress voted to invest a total of \$65 billion
1645 in the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program, or
1646 BEAD, to advance universal broadband access, with over \$1.8
1647 billion reserved for my home state of California. By the end
1648 of the Biden Administration, state deployment offices had
1649 made progress through the long process requirements,
1650 guidelines, and mandated studies included in law. They made
1651 awards to grantees who were committed to building fiber lines
1652 to hard-to-reach areas and strengthening connectivity in
1653 underserved areas.

1654 However, lamentably, there were no shovels in the
1655 ground, and I was one of the people who joined Republicans to
1656 criticize how long it had taken for that to happen and to be
1657 an advocate for permanent reform in this field and in others.
1658 But by the beginning of 2025, states were ready to build

1659 their -- begin their build-outs, and the Trump Administration
1660 decided to issue new regulations which halted any progress.
1661 So we are back where we started. We are no better off and
1662 progress is still stalled today, as the administration holds
1663 the BEAD program's funding hostage.

1664 The Federal Communications Commission is guided by the
1665 principle that all Americans should have access to
1666 communications services. The Trump Administration's pause on
1667 BEAD funding broadband build-out for over a year goes
1668 directly against this principle, and continues the very
1669 things I joined Republicans to be critical of under the Biden
1670 Administration.

1671 Ms. Gomez, how did delays in broadband deployment affect
1672 the FCC's abilities to meet its goal of making affordable
1673 connectivity accessible to all Americans?

1674 And how can we ensure that people have the skills to
1675 take advantage of broadband once it is deployed?

1676 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

1677 We want to get broadband to every community everywhere,
1678 as soon as possible, because we really risk leaving people
1679 further and further behind. And I am afraid that we will go
1680 from having a digital divide to a digital chasm if we don't
1681 do that.

1682 But I am glad that you raise the totality of what
1683 Congress did with the broadband equity and access program,

1684 because one thing we cannot ignore is that we need
1685 affordability and we need people to have the digital skills
1686 in order to take advantage of broadband that will give them
1687 access to this digital economy. And I am afraid that this
1688 administration has completely lost its focus on that, and
1689 that is why I say I am afraid that, if we don't ensure that
1690 these networks are sustainable but making sure that everyone
1691 can use them and afford them, we are going to be building
1692 bridges to nowhere.

1693 *Mr. Peters. Right. Well, I share that concern, and
1694 thank you. And I think it is critical that we invest in and
1695 continue to improve programs like the Universal Service Fund
1696 to support affordable rates in underserved areas and rural
1697 access to hard-to-reach areas.

1698 And again, when I first came to Congress we were all
1699 talking about rural broadband and how important that was. I
1700 think the pandemic showed us that the digital divide exists
1701 even in wealthy neighborhoods like the ones that I serve, and
1702 I think we should get at it.

1703 Along the lines of permanent reform, last year I joined
1704 with my colleagues, Representatives Joyce and Landman, to
1705 introduce the bipartisan Broadband and Telecommunications
1706 Rail Act. We have heard that when broadband companies try to
1707 build out communications infrastructure across railroad
1708 crossings, the costs and approval times skyrocket. To

1709 streamline the deployment process between broadband providers
1710 and railroad carriers, the bill would implement firm
1711 timelines, conflict resolution processes, and fee scales to
1712 help the FCC move faster in support of the public interest.
1713 It would outline the responsibility of each party and give
1714 the FCC authority where it previously had none.

1715 Commissioner Gomez, how would granting the FCC authority
1716 over this process speed up access to fast, reliable, and
1717 affordable connectivity?

1718 And are there other areas in broadband deployment that
1719 the FCC does not currently but should have jurisdiction?

1720 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question, and I am very
1721 supportive of streamlining approvals, and particularly of
1722 your bill's focus on making sure that the costs that are
1723 being recovered are actually the costs of providing those
1724 approvals, and that, I think, is very important.

1725 So I think it is very helpful when Congress gives us
1726 instructions on what it is that we are supposed to do,
1727 particularly in the area where we are, in fact, acting to
1728 either preempt local regulations or tell others what we think
1729 that they should be doing. So I look forward to working with
1730 you in the future on this.

1731 *Mr. Peters. Great. Maybe, Commissioner Trusty, any
1732 other areas in broadband deployment where the FCC needs
1733 jurisdiction, we need to give you jurisdiction?

1734 *Ms. Trusty. Well, thank you for the question and thank
1735 you for your work on this bipartisan legislation.

1736 The Commission is working on a number of fronts to
1737 remove regulatory barriers that impede the deployment of
1738 broadband, whether it is pole attachments, environmental or
1739 historic reviews, and expanding access to rights of way. I
1740 think all of these things will help us accelerate access to
1741 connectivity.

1742 *Mr. Peters. Well, keep us posted on that.

1743 I am out of time and I yield back. Thank you.

1744 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentleman. The chair now
1745 recognizes the representative from Georgia, Representative
1746 Carter, for five minutes for your questions.

1747 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
1748 thank all of you for being here.

1749 Chairman Carr, there has been a lot of ink here recently
1750 in the past few months or so regarding the streaming market
1751 and competition, and there has been a lot of confusion about
1752 regulatory jurisdiction in this space. Do you care to give
1753 us a view on the current landscape?

1754 *Mr. Carr. Well, streaming is something that we stay
1755 apprised of at the FCC. It is adjacent to markets that we
1756 directly regulate, and it is intertwined. And I think there
1757 is -- has been concern increasingly expressed recently about
1758 consolidation in the streaming market, and potentially

1759 further consolidation in the streaming market that could
1760 potentially harm consumers.

1761 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. Great. Thank you, Chairman
1762 Carr, and I am going to jump into -- straight into some of my
1763 next inquiry regarding broadband permitting reform. And as
1764 you know, I have introduced the American Broadband Deployment
1765 Act of 2025 to help cut red tape and to speed broadband
1766 build-out and to close the digital divide across America,
1767 which has been passed on to the full committee and awaits
1768 further consideration.

1769 Chairman Carr, I appreciate your support for my
1770 legislation in your testimony, and I want to ask you, why is
1771 it important for Congress to pass my legislation codifying
1772 your reforms?

1773 And what kinds of steps is the FCC exploring to address
1774 state and local barriers to fixed and mobile broadband
1775 deployment?

1776 *Mr. Carr. Well, thank you, Congressman, for your
1777 leadership on permitting reform. I had the chance to visit
1778 with you in Georgia and actually splice fiber at an active
1779 build. And as we saw there and other places around the
1780 country, we have to make sure -- that is a tough job, it is a
1781 difficult job, but we shouldn't have red tape standing in the
1782 way. And I continue to think one of the most important
1783 things that can happen is to pass that package of permitting

1784 reform bills to make sure that we keep turning dirt.

1785 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. I want to highlight another
1786 permitting national security issue regarding undersea cables.
1787 This is something that I have taken an interest in because it
1788 is critical broadband infrastructure that carries over 95
1789 percent of international data traffic. I have got a bill
1790 that is called the Undersea Cables Protection Act which will
1791 eliminate the need for redundant, five-year special use
1792 permits in national marine sanctuaries to streamline
1793 duplicate permitting that is significantly slowing down the
1794 deployment of cables.

1795 Chairman Carr, can you explain why slow-rolling subsea
1796 cable infrastructure is a threat to national security?

1797 *Mr. Carr. Well, thank you, Congressman, for working on
1798 this.

1799 Most consumers probably don't realize it, but, to your
1800 view, over 95 percent of all internet traffic ultimately
1801 travels over undersea cable. So we are working at the FCC
1802 right now to incentivize secure investment, new undersea
1803 cables, cybersecurity requirements for some of the technology
1804 that is in there, and I think your legislation would go a
1805 long way to promoting greater, securer build-out of that
1806 critical infrastructure.

1807 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. And a lot of this information
1808 is in financial markets as well, isn't it?

1809 *Mr. Carr. That is right.

1810 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. Commissioner Trusty, I want to
1811 ask you, the Commission recently issued a notice of proposed
1812 rulemaking on subsea cables that also addressed the
1813 importance of speeding the deployment of cables. Can you
1814 talk a little bit about how the FCC plans to expedite the
1815 permitting and licensing process generally, and why
1816 facilitating the deployment of cables is so important?

1817 *Ms. Trusty. Yes, absolutely, and thank you for your
1818 leadership on this issue.

1819 So last year, in August, the FCC adopted a proceeding
1820 where we streamlined the licensing and permitting processes
1821 for undersea cables. We updated outdated rules, we
1822 established faster processing timelines for eligible
1823 applicants, and we cut unnecessary administrative steps or
1824 disclosures. And that helps to promote the fast and
1825 efficient deployment of undersea cables, which is essential
1826 for our economic and national security. This positions us to
1827 be able to promote more U.S.-led cable projects, to diversify
1828 our subsea traffic routes so in the event of sabotage or
1829 compromise there is no single point of failure, and it means
1830 we can strengthen our disaster recovery and emergency
1831 response plans. So it really helps with redundancy in this
1832 critical infrastructure.

1833 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. And it would be naive of us to

1834 think that this wouldn't be used as a weapon at some point.

1835 *Ms. Trusty. That is right.

1836 *Mr. Carter of Georgia. Well, thank you, Chairman Carr
1837 and Commissioner Trusty. I am going to do the chairman a
1838 favor and give him back almost a minute.

1839 And I yield back.

1840 *Mr. Hudson. I appreciate that. The chair now
1841 recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Ruiz, for five
1842 minutes to ask your questions.

1843 *Mr. Ruiz. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1844 Look, I want to begin by addressing the troublesome
1845 direction Chairman Carr has taken the FCC. He is a tool of
1846 President Trump's Project 2025 agenda to suppress freedom of
1847 speech and those who criticize Trump, and to forcefully favor
1848 Trump's billionaire friends and supporters in order to
1849 control the content.

1850 One, publicly criticizing Jimmy Kimmel Live over their
1851 content criticizing Trump, leading ABC and some affiliates to
1852 pull the show out of fear of a Department of Justice lawsuit
1853 and threats of pulling their license.

1854 Two, reopen complaints against ABC, CBS, and NBC
1855 affiliates for alleged "news distortion," while ignoring
1856 similar complaints against other networks that support
1857 President Trump.

1858 Three, linked investigations to license reviews and

1859 looked into platforms like YouTube and Comcast, NBC
1860 Universal, sending a message that what companies say or do
1861 could be closely watched, overly scrutinized by the FCC.

1862 Oh, and finally, for overseeing and facilitating media
1863 consolidation. Specifically, the proposed Nexstar-TEGNA
1864 merger, which is owned by one of Trump's besties and
1865 supporters, and would give one company unprecedented reach to
1866 over 80 percent of households in America, controlling the
1867 content, threatening competition, weakening local journalism,
1868 and driving up costs for consumers.

1869 The Trump Administration does not care about everyday
1870 Americans. They care about power, about control, and their
1871 billionaire friends. They care about making the rich richer
1872 and pushing their own agendas to suppress criticism of Trump
1873 and limit what Americans see on TV to control the message and
1874 push his propaganda. That is not America, and that shouldn't
1875 be happening in America. Americans deserve an FCC that
1876 protects free expression and ensures all communities have
1877 access to diverse content.

1878 Commissioner Gomez, what concerns do you have on the
1879 Nexstar-TEGNA merger and Chairman Carr raising the national
1880 audience cap from 39 to 54.5 percent illegally on a special
1881 deal to benefit Trump's friends?

1882 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question, Congressman.

1883 What we fundamentally want is we want local communities

1884 to get information about their local communities. And what
1885 happens when we have too much consolidation by these national
1886 corporations that own these local broadcasters is we lose the
1887 diversity of voices and we lose that local news content that
1888 we have. Couple that with the defunding of public media, and
1889 we are also losing even more voices in our local communities.

1890 Now, the 39 percent ownership cap is in the statute. I
1891 don't think we can waive it. I think it would take an act of
1892 Congress in order to allow us to be able to grant a
1893 transaction of this size because of the fact that not only is
1894 the 39 percent cap in the statute, it is also -- we were
1895 forbidden from forbearing from that cap.

1896 *Mr. Ruiz. Thank you. Thank you. The Trump
1897 Administration has failed to ease the financial burden on
1898 everyday Americans. Their actions have raised costs.
1899 Specifically, they have posed several Federal initiatives,
1900 including the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program,
1901 State Broadband Price Regulation, and the Universal Service
1902 Fund, all of which would raise costs.

1903 One of these programs, the USF, is crucial for ensuring
1904 that communities in the Coachella, San Jacinto, and Imperial
1905 Valleys have access to reliable and affordable broadband and
1906 telephone services. Through programs like Lifeline, USF
1907 provides direct discounts to low-income households, helping
1908 students, agricultural workers, and families stay connected

1909 while also supporting broadband deployment in rural and
1910 underserved areas where service would otherwise be too
1911 costly. USF alone helps expand essential services and
1912 promotes more affordable and competitive broadband options
1913 for residents.

1914 Commissioner Trusty, in your confirmation you
1915 highlighted your commitment to "considering adjustments to
1916 USF programs to better target resources to underserved
1917 communities.'" Do you still maintain that commitment?

1918 *Ms. Trusty. Yes, I do.

1919 *Mr. Ruiz. Thank you. And would you commit to working
1920 with Members of Congress before the FCC releases any
1921 rulemaking or public notices on changes to USF programs?

1922 *Ms. Trusty. I am always happy to work with Congress.

1923 *Mr. Ruiz. Will you commit to work before any changes
1924 are made?

1925 *Ms. Trusty. I am always happy to commit to work to
1926 (sic) Congress.

1927 *Mr. Ruiz. I will take that as yes, and I am going to
1928 take your word for it.

1929 *Ms. Trusty. I am always happy to work with Congress.

1930 *Mr. Ruiz. Without these programs, households face
1931 barriers to education, telehealth, and emergency
1932 communications, leaving them disconnected from opportunities
1933 and civic life. We cannot discuss fairness and media

1934 oversight without addressing the systemic barriers that leave
1935 communities behind, and I am tired of seeing time and time
1936 again how the Trump Administration hurts Americans and make
1937 their everyday lives more costly. It is time to hold them
1938 accountable.

1939 Thank you, and I yield back.

1940 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentleman. The chair now
1941 recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina, Representative
1942 Fry, for five minutes to ask your questions.

1943 *Mr. Fry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the
1944 witnesses for being here. Chairman Carr, Commissioners, I
1945 really appreciate the opportunity to have this hearing today.

1946 Commissioner Trusty, I understand that you had recently
1947 attended a conference in Dubai, and I am curious your
1948 thoughts on that conference, just briefly, and what we need
1949 to do to ensure that the U.S. has a more unified position
1950 going into the conference in 2027. It seems critically
1951 important, given the conference is being held in China of all
1952 places.

1953 *Ms. Trusty. Yes, thank you so much for the question.

1954 So, as you know, the WRC 2023 was held in Dubai, and the
1955 unfortunate issue for the United States was that we didn't
1956 have auction authority, we didn't have a long-term spectrum
1957 pipeline, and we didn't have a unified strategy. And so we
1958 were sidelined from very important discussions which meant

1959 that we couldn't emerge from that conference with wins.

1960 Now, thanks to leadership from members of this
1961 subcommittee, we have auction authority, we have a long-term
1962 spectrum pipeline, and I think that gives us a foundation to
1963 develop a unified strategy where we can focus on key U.S.
1964 interests, working with our international allies in advance
1965 of WRC 2027, to emerge from this conference with wins.

1966 *Mr. Fry. Thank you for that.

1967 Obviously, you know, during the first Trump
1968 Administration they unlocked additional six gigahertz of
1969 bandwidth. In 2020, when the first Trump Administration made
1970 that available, nearly 70 countries followed our lead. Now
1971 China is trying to undermine those efforts in Europe, and we
1972 are hearing good things, obviously, now out of the Trump
1973 Administration defending that abroad.

1974 But have you talked -- you have talked about the
1975 importance of WiFi to the American innovation. Can you
1976 explain why it is pivotal that America lead on WiFi?

1977 *Ms. Trusty. Absolutely. So as I mentioned a little
1978 bit earlier, I have been a proponent of an all-of-the-above
1979 approach to spectrum policy, where we are accommodating a
1980 variety of users, use cases, and technologies. When you look
1981 at things like CBRS, you know, the United States has long
1982 been a leader in innovative uses of spectrum, and CBRS is a
1983 model for that. It accommodates the military,

1984 transportation, logistics, tracking, schools, hospitals, and
1985 much more.

1986 And so my job at the FCC is to ensure spectrum is being
1987 put to its highest and best use. But given all of the use
1988 cases, I think it emphasizes the meaningful benefit of CBRS
1989 and unlicensed spectrum.

1990 *Mr. Fry. Thank you so much for that.

1991 Commissioner Gomez, I appreciated your comments earlier
1992 about, I think, the -- that -- maybe the mission, in your
1993 opinion, of the FCC has shifted, that you are not supposed to
1994 police speech, that you are drifting from the mission. Those
1995 are some of the comments that I think you made. But I am
1996 curious.

1997 In 2023 Senate Majority Leader and House Minority Leader
1998 Hakeem Jeffries sent a letter to Fox News regarding their
1999 coverage of the 2020 election, pressuring private news outlet
2000 owners to order specific shows, and hosts to change their
2001 political coverage, and issue compelled, on-air statements
2002 solely because they disagreed with that coverage. Although
2003 you were not on the Commission at the time, based on your
2004 opening statements, do you condemn those attempts by
2005 Democrats to censor free speech and journalism?

2006 *Ms. Gomez. The First Amendment prohibits government
2007 interference in free speech. And so, in my view, the FCC
2008 should not be engaged in any activities that lead to either

2009 policing, bias, or pressuring newsrooms into how to report
2010 the news. So we should not be regulating content.

2011 *Mr. Fry. So --

2012 *Ms. Gomez. At all.

2013 *Mr. Fry. -- it would be fair to say that you would
2014 disagree with Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries's letter to
2015 Fox News?

2016 *Ms. Gomez. I think that to the extent any actions to
2017 pressure news by the government has led to the abuses that
2018 you are seeing under this administration, we should
2019 reconsider it.

2020 *Mr. Fry. Thank you for that. I am glad to hear you
2021 that you disagree with that.

2022 Would you also -- in 2023, progressive activists
2023 petitioned the FCC to deny the renewal of a WTXF TV's
2024 broadcast license, Fox 29 out of Philadelphia, arguing that
2025 Fox's -- Fox News 2020 election coverage rendered the
2026 licensee unfit for the public interest and character
2027 standards. The FCC issued a public notice, treated the
2028 matter as a permit, but disclosed proceeding and formally
2029 invited public comment on whether the Fox 29 license should
2030 be renewed. It was only after the 2024 election that the
2031 Commission dismissed the petition and renewed that license.

2032 Commissioner Gomez, during that period when the petition
2033 was pending and the FCC was actively taking comments on

2034 whether Fox 29's license should be renewed based on coverage,
2035 did you issue any public statement condemning the use of the
2036 public interest and character standards to attack the
2037 station's license over election-related speech?

2038 *Ms. Gomez. I am so glad you raised the issue of the
2039 Fox petition to deny by an outside party, because it gives me
2040 the opportunity to talk to you about what is different today.
2041 That was a petition to deny a license renewal, and it was
2042 treated like other petitions to renew licenses. In this case
2043 what we are seeing is the FCC using complaints by a partisan
2044 group in order to police content and in order to harass and
2045 in order to affect how these stations are actually giving us
2046 the news, and that is light years different.

2047 What you didn't see under the last administration was
2048 the last administration investigating news outlets for the
2049 content of their broadcasts. You didn't see them using the
2050 public comment cycle in order to ask them, did a station
2051 violate any FCC rules? That is not what we do.

2052 *Mr. Fry. No, they just did that --

2053 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

2054 *Mr. Fry. They just did that directly for --

2055 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

2056 *Mr. Fry. To say that they did not engage in --

2057 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired. I gave
2058 a lot of extra time for the witness to answer, but we will

2059 now recognize the representative from Michigan,
2060 Representative Dingell, for five minutes for her questions.

2061 *Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to
2062 the commissioners for being here today.

2063 This committee has a very serious responsibility to
2064 conduct oversight of the FCC. And while we made a lot of
2065 progress under the last administration, I am deeply concerned
2066 that under this administration that the FCC is moving in the
2067 wrong direction. I am going to associate myself with the
2068 previous comments by my Democratic colleagues and move to
2069 some areas that I am very deeply concerned about that are
2070 impacting people's lives.

2071 As vehicles become increasingly connected and reliant on
2072 wireless communications, we have a responsibility to ensure
2073 these technologies are not weaponized to harm people,
2074 especially survivors of domestic violence. Survivors have
2075 reported that their abusers have used connected vehicle
2076 services to track their movements, stalk them in real time,
2077 or remotely disable their vehicles. Yet today there is no
2078 clear, consistent, or confidential process for survivors to
2079 cut off an abuser's access to their vehicle services.

2080 In 2024 I sent a letter to the FCC urging it to take
2081 proactive steps to address the threat of domestic abusers
2082 exploiting connectivity tools in vehicles to harass and
2083 intimidate their partners. While I worked with the FCC on

2084 this issue, the lack of a clear, survivor-centered process is
2085 why I introduced the bipartisan Safe Vehicle Access for
2086 Survivors Act with Congressman Dan Crenshaw. The bill is
2087 designed to create a secure pathway for survivors to disable
2088 connected vehicle access tied to wireless-enabled vehicle
2089 technologies, while providing clarity for automakers and
2090 service providers.

2091 Commissioner Gomez, From the FCC's perspective, how
2092 serious is the risk of these wireless-enabled vehicle
2093 technologies can be misused to facilitate stalking, coercive
2094 control, or other forms of abuse?

2095 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you so much for that question, and
2096 thank you for your leadership on this issue. It is so
2097 important to be able to protect survivors of domestic abuse.

2098 As you know, we took action in the previous
2099 administration to require companies to sever the cell phone
2100 accounts of victims of domestic abuse, and also to not allow
2101 information in the abuser's bill to be given about the
2102 victims. And that is so important for their safety. So what
2103 you are doing is you are promoting now that we do this with
2104 vehicles.

2105 We sought comment on that issue, but I would welcome
2106 working with you and some guidance from --

2107 *Mrs. Dingell. Okay, I am going to ask you a brief
2108 question because I want to get to another issue.

2109 *Ms. Gomez. Yes.

2110 *Mrs. Dingell. But given the FCC's jurisdiction over
2111 wireless services, does the FCC currently have the authority
2112 to address these harms?

2113 Are there limits to your authority without congressional
2114 action?

2115 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

2116 I do believe we have authority to address them. It is
2117 always helpful when it is outlined in the statute directly.

2118 *Mrs. Dingell. I would encourage the FCC to please act,
2119 and we will come back with congressional and try to get that
2120 done, too.

2121 Chairman Carr, I want to talk about broadband build-out
2122 failures affecting people not only in my district but across
2123 the country. Bridgewater Township is in my district, but
2124 like so many places across the country they were promised
2125 broadband service through the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity
2126 Fund, also known as RDOF. We are now in -- they were
2127 promised, by the way -- my community was promised service by
2128 the end of 2024, and we are now in 2026, and this particular
2129 community only has 32 percent of the -- has -- have been
2130 given that access.

2131 Let me be clear. This isn't just a failure by one
2132 company, which I have written, but it is a failure of FCC
2133 oversight. The FCC is responsible for ensuring that

2134 taxpayers' dollars is dedicated to broadband build-out, and
2135 the money that is there is used as intended, and that the
2136 communities actually receive the broadband service they were
2137 promised. Instead, communities across the country are being
2138 left behind without reliable internet for school, work, or
2139 health care.

2140 Chairman Carr, what concrete enforcement actions is the
2141 FCC taking to hold those vendors that are being given
2142 contracts for its RDOF obligations?

2143 How are you making sure that communities like mine are
2144 not punished for losing access to other Federal broadband
2145 build-out programs because of companies' false promises and
2146 FCC enforcement inaction?

2147 *Mr. Carr. Yes, thank you, Congressman, for the
2148 question and your advocacy on this.

2149 It is very important that the FCC take enforcement
2150 action in those types of cases, and I can assure you that we
2151 have a number of enforcement matters going. If you made a
2152 promise to a community to deliver, then the FCC needs to hold
2153 you accountable to that.

2154 We have also been working to make sure that NTIA and
2155 Commerce, as these BEAD dollars come online, if there is
2156 opportunities to pick up communities through that, we should
2157 collaborate on that. But my goal is the same as yours, is
2158 people should get the broadband that they were promised.

2159 *Mrs. Dingell. Well, I hope the FCC --

2160 *Mr. Hudson. The gentlelady's time has expired.

2161 *Mrs. Dingell. I know, but I just -- I know you will
2162 look at Bridgewater now, but let's look at all those
2163 communities. You are two years behind. Thank you.

2164 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. For what purpose does the
2165 gentleman from South Carolina seek recognition?

2166 *Mr. Fry. I have a unanimous consent request.

2167 *Mr. Hudson. You can state the request.

2168 *Mr. Fry. To add an article into the record titled,
2169 "Democrats want Feds to Block Miami Latinos from Hearing
2170 Conservative Radio.'"

2171 *Mr. Hudson. Without objection, so ordered.

2172 [The information follows:]

2173

2174 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2175

2176 *Mr. Hudson. The chair now recognizes the gentleman
2177 from Virginia, Mr. Griffith, for five minutes to ask your
2178 questions.

2179 *Mr. Griffith. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I
2180 apologize to our witnesses today that I had a markup in
2181 another committee that I had to be at, so I have got an
2182 update on what is going on.

2183 Chairman Carr, I represent a lot of small jails that are
2184 concerned with the cost of operating a phone system for the
2185 inmates, which is a tough balance. I understand the need for
2186 prisoners, particularly inmates awaiting trial, to have
2187 reasonable communication rates, and I get that. But can you
2188 briefly talk about the useful -- and all of your standards
2189 and what you have been doing to try to make sure that smaller
2190 jails in rural areas, et cetera, have the ability to meet
2191 that balance, to be able to provide it? Because some of my
2192 jails have talked about not allowing them, you know, any
2193 communication because they can't afford the equipment to make
2194 sure that the calls are made in a safe manner and in a proper
2195 manner.

2196 And as a former criminal defense attorney, I am
2197 concerned because I don't want to have to go to the -- if I
2198 were to return to that practice of law, I wouldn't want to
2199 have to go to the jail every time I needed to talk to one of
2200 them, one of my clients.

2201 *Mr. Carr. Yes. Well, thank you, Congressman, for your
2202 work on this, and this is an issue that is very important.
2203 It is very complex.

2204 As you note, on the one hand, we want to make sure that
2205 incarcerated individuals and their families can continue to
2206 communicate. At the same time, we have an obligation to
2207 jails and the broader community to make sure those
2208 communications take place with technology that ensures
2209 safety.

2210 The FCC, over the years, has tried to strike the right
2211 balance, and it has been difficult. There has been at least
2212 six different FCC actions, I think four different court cases
2213 or challenges. Congress came together in the Martha Wright
2214 Reid Act and gave us additional authority, and the FCC
2215 recently revised some of the rates. The rates are higher
2216 than the rates that were initially set the first go-round by
2217 the Biden Administration, they are -- sorry, they are lower
2218 than the rates initially set by the Biden Administration,
2219 they are higher than the rates the Biden Administration set
2220 at the end.

2221 But to your point, what we were seeing with those last
2222 round of Biden rates is that they were too low in some
2223 circumstances, that inmates were getting denied calling
2224 services because the jail couldn't afford it or they couldn't
2225 afford the technology to make sure the communications were

2226 safe.

2227 So it is a complex issue with really well-intentioned
2228 people on all sides of this, and we have a proceeding right
2229 now to see if we can't, you know, once and for all, strike
2230 the right balance here.

2231 *Mr. Griffith. Thank you. And as I said before, I have
2232 a fairly rural district. It is pretty large, got some
2233 mountains in the way of some of this stuff. And so we have
2234 had some success, and some of my folks really like Starlink.
2235 But we need competition in order to -- competition is always
2236 good for bringing down prices. What is the FCC doing to try
2237 to promote additional providers in that space?

2238 And what are your goals on reforming the satellite
2239 licensing and so-called EarthLink connections?

2240 *Mr. Carr. Yes, thank you, Congressman.

2241 One thing that we are doing is taking a technology-
2242 neutral approach. There is many, many portions of this
2243 country where a high-speed fiber connection makes sense. But
2244 we have to be open-minded where cost per location exceeds a
2245 certain point, in which case you need to then look at other
2246 technologies like fixed wireless, like LEO systems, and that
2247 is what we are doing. We are making sure people can compete
2248 on a level playing field.

2249 *Mr. Griffith. And I appreciate that because there are
2250 some areas of my district where there is one house, two

2251 houses, maybe three houses up a holler, and it would cost us
2252 a minimum of 100, maybe as much as \$200,000 just to get fiber
2253 to those couple of houses, and there is no way you would ever
2254 recoup the costs. So I appreciate that.

2255 I appreciate also that the Commission has opened a
2256 docket to tighten foreign ownership standards for FCC
2257 licenses. Could you explain the difficulty in sorting out
2258 increasingly complex ownership structures sometimes used by
2259 licensees?

2260 *Mr. Carr. Yes, we have rules and regulations on the
2261 books to try to make sure that we can process that. We
2262 obviously want investment in this country, but we need to
2263 make sure that there are security checks in place, and we
2264 have been taking a number of actions, again, to try to strike
2265 that right balance.

2266 *Mr. Griffith. I appreciate that. I will tell you, my
2267 team thought we ought to have a little bit of fun, so I was
2268 requested to ask -- and I have some questions we have to put
2269 for the record, but you don't have enough time to answer them
2270 with what I have left.

2271 [The information follows:]

2272

2273 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2274

2275 *Mr. Griffith. But I was requested to ask, which one
2276 was your favorite in eliminating FCC regulations?

2277 Did you prefer or have more fun eliminating regulations
2278 on phone booths or telegraph lines?

2279 *Mr. Carr. It is funny, I was going to -- before you
2280 said it I was going to say telegraph. Yes, we had some -- so
2281 much dead wood in our regulations that there were still rules
2282 that tied back to telegraph service, and I think that was a
2283 good one to get rid of.

2284 *Mr. Griffith. Yes, I agree, and that is why sometimes
2285 you have to take a look at everything and eliminate those
2286 things that are no longer appropriate.

2287 I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

2288 Excuse me, Madam Chairman.

2289 *Mrs. Fedorchak. [Presiding.] The chair now recognizes
2290 Ms. Barragan for her five minutes of questions.

2291 *Ms. Barragan. Thank you.

2292 Commissioner Gomez, I would like to start with you and
2293 follow up to that last interaction. The chairman said that
2294 families should be able to communicate with their families
2295 when they are in prison. Wasn't there an effort to raise
2296 cost or the caps for prisoners to be able to make calls to
2297 their families to make it -- which could lead to them costing
2298 more, making it more expensive to communicate with family?

2299 *Ms. Gomez. Yes. Congress, in the Martha Wright Reid

2300 Act, directed the FCC to lower the cost of the IPCS, which is
2301 the prison services payphone and video calls, to make sure
2302 that they were just and reasonable and that they fairly
2303 compensated these providers.

2304 This administration -- and the last administration did
2305 that, we substantially reduced the cost of the calls. We had
2306 three mandatory data collections for -- to get the correct
2307 data so that we could determine whether the rates were just
2308 and reasonable. This administration reversed what we did and
2309 said, well, we don't have enough data, so we are going to
2310 give the payphone providers everything they want.

2311 And the problem with that is what the payphone providers
2312 are doing is they are providing to these prisons and jails
2313 services that are not related to the cost of making those
2314 calls. We are forcing families of incarcerated people to pay
2315 to provide search warrant processing, to transcribe and
2316 convert into digital format, to support litigation and
2317 investigations, to aid in investigations, and to provide for
2318 skilled investigators. That has nothing to do with the
2319 making of these calls. But this administration decided that
2320 they would provide that because we don't have enough data
2321 after three mandatory data collections.

2322 So we are forcing families to pay for these big costs
2323 because the providers are monopoly providers that provide
2324 these services for free to these prisons and to these jails

2325 on the backs of these families.

2326 *Ms. Barragan. So these families are paying more to
2327 communicate with their --

2328 *Ms. Gomez. Yes, they are. Their costs have gone up.

2329 *Ms. Barragan. -- their family members. Thank you.

2330 Commissioner Carr, you have said that you think the
2331 agency should focus on information that consumers want and
2332 need. Is that accurate?

2333 *Mr. Carr. Yes.

2334 *Ms. Barragan. And you have also said they should have
2335 information so they can make an informed decision. Is that
2336 accurate?

2337 *Mr. Carr. Yes. That is right.

2338 *Ms. Barragan. Okay. I want to show you one of these.
2339 You know what this looks -- you know what this is, I am sure,
2340 right? A nutrition label, the broadband label. Okay, one of
2341 the pieces of this label is an early termination fee on
2342 whether there is one or not. Do you see? Have you -- it is
2343 down here. I don't know if you could see it from where you
2344 are at, but certainly you must be familiar with that,
2345 correct?

2346 *Mr. Carr. Yes.

2347 *Ms. Barragan. Okay. Do you believe that consumers
2348 should know if there is going to be an early termination fee
2349 on a plan that they are signing up for?

2350 *Mr. Carr. What we are focused on is making sure that
2351 consumers have clear, concise --

2352 *Ms. Barragan. Do you think that a consumer should know
2353 that there is going to be a cancellation fee? It is very
2354 simple.

2355 *Mr. Carr. This is an issue that we are looking at
2356 right now. What we want to reach is a point at which
2357 consumers have all of the information.

2358 *Ms. Barragan. You don't have an opinion on whether
2359 consumers should know if there is going to be an early
2360 termination fee? That is shocking, Mr. Carr, Commissioner
2361 Carr, and let me tell you why. This company too has an early
2362 termination fee, up to \$750 depending on the device and the
2363 contract. So to have the chair of the committee -- of this
2364 agency not have an opinion on whether consumers should have
2365 informed --

2366 *Mr. Carr. With respect to --

2367 *Ms. Barragan. -- information on a cancellation --

2368 *Mr. Carr. The FCC has an active --

2369 *Ms. Barragan. You just confirmed to me --

2370 *Mr. Carr. -- proceeding underway right now --

2371 *Ms. Barragan. I am not -- there is no question
2372 pending, sir.

2373 *Mr. Carr. -- questions about this.

2374 *Ms. Barragan. You -- there is no question pending.

2375 You just told me the consumer should have the information to
2376 make an informed decision. I can tell you in my
2377 congressional district, where the people are working class
2378 and they are low income, they are going to want to know if
2379 there is an early termination fee. And they are certainly
2380 going to want to know if there is a \$750 early termination
2381 fee.

2382 So Commissioner Gomez, I am going to turn to you. Do
2383 you think consumers should be able to know if there is an
2384 early termination fee on their plan?

2385 *Ms. Gomez. Yes, I do.

2386 *Ms. Barragan. And isn't there a proposal now to
2387 eliminate that requirement that would read to consumers
2388 whether there is an early termination fee?

2389 *Ms. Gomez. There -- yes. What it would do is
2390 obfuscate the fees by making -- by pulling them all up into
2391 one category.

2392 Now, I believe that companies, carriers should compete
2393 on price and quality, not on being able to hide information
2394 from their consumers.

2395 *Ms. Barragan. Okay. And I now want to turn to these
2396 same labels. There is companies that go out and they market
2397 to consumers in Spanish language. And then these customers
2398 come in and sign up for a service. Should those consumers be
2399 able to get this information in their language that they were

2400 marketed in?

2401 *Ms. Gomez. Yes. The proposal that the FCC has just
2402 adopted would eliminate that requirement, even though the
2403 companies are marketing in another language.

2404 *Ms. Barragan. Great. Thank you. I agree that I think
2405 consumers should know this.

2406 I would like to enter into the record this article,
2407 October 10, 2022 from The Verge. It is titled, "Brendan Carr
2408 Wants to Let Internet Providers Charge Hidden Fees Again.'"

2409 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Without objection --

2410 *Ms. Barragan. Thank you, I yield back.

2411 *Mrs. Fedorchak. -- so ordered.

2412 [The information follows:]

2413

2414 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

2415

2416 *Mrs. Fedorchak. All right, the chair recognizes
2417 Representative Cammack for her five minutes of questions.

2418 *Mrs. Cammack. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank
2419 you to our witnesses.

2420 Commissioner Carr, great to see you again. You could
2421 hardly get a word in edgewise a minute ago, so would you like
2422 to take 30, 45 seconds or so to respond to the
2423 representative's accusations, we will say?

2424 *Mr. Carr. Well, look, as a general matter, I will say
2425 this. There is a lot of discussion here about prices and
2426 affordability. But thanks to President Trump, that is
2427 changing. Since January 2025 alone, prices for wireless
2428 plans are down over 4 percent. They are down over seven
2429 percent from Biden-era highs. Prices for smartphones are
2430 down nine percent, and speeds are up. So prices are down,
2431 speeds are up, and competition is intensifying.

2432 In respect to broadband labels, if you look at the chart
2433 that was held up, it is very confusing. And that is the
2434 point that we are looking at is how do we get the information
2435 that consumers want, whether it is ETF or other information,
2436 so that they can find it and see it accurately and quickly.
2437 Let's separate the wheat from the chaff. And that is what
2438 that proceeding is about.

2439 *Mrs. Cammack. Absolutely. And we have seen an immense
2440 amount of deregulation, which is good for consumers because

2441 it helps foster that competition.

2442 And I know you have spoken to me about the REINS Act and
2443 the work that is being done there. Talking about REINS Act
2444 being the largest regulatory reform effort in American
2445 history, what would the passage and adoption of that bill,
2446 which would require Congress to have an up or down vote on
2447 any major rule or regulation that has an industry impact of
2448 \$100 million, what kind of impact would that have at your
2449 agency?

2450 *Mr. Carr. Well, I think it is important. Again, as we
2451 just talked about, we did a sweep through all rules and
2452 regulations on the FCC's books. We have eliminated over
2453 1,000 rules or regulations, or teed them up for removal. We
2454 have over 2,000 enacted proceedings. Again, when you think
2455 about one agency, the FCC, it is actually a relatively small
2456 agency, and you spread that out across the Federal
2457 Government, so some mechanism to make sure that needless
2458 regulations aren't getting on the books and staying on the
2459 books would really help unlock further economic growth for
2460 the country.

2461 *Mrs. Cammack. And I just want to repeat that again for
2462 folks watching back home. You guys took 1,000 -- over 1,000
2463 -- regulations off the books, and prices are coming down. It
2464 is almost like the smaller government gets, the better it
2465 gets for people across America, right?

2466 *Mr. Carr. Right.

2467 *Mrs. Cammack. Okay. I love that. Well, another issue
2468 that you and I have talked about and I know everyone can
2469 really understand is the issue of robocalls and scam texts.
2470 I must get a half a dozen or a dozen a day, and it makes you
2471 want to throw your phone across the room. Talk to me about
2472 the work that the agency is doing to stop the scam texts and
2473 the fraud that is taking place there, and what authorities or
2474 additional authorities your agency would need in order for us
2475 to crack down on these robocalls and these scam texts.

2476 *Mr. Carr. This is an issue that across the Trump
2477 Administration and, really, every administration we have had,
2478 there has been a lot of work to crack down on illegal
2479 robocalls. Right now we are coordinating across the Federal
2480 level, whether it is the FCC, FTC, we are working with state
2481 attorney generals, as well.

2482 And again, we are tackling this issue at every single
2483 portion of the life cycle of the call. We are looking at
2484 things like know your customer, so if you are going to
2485 onboard a business to allow them to place calls to U.S.
2486 subscribers, we are pushing to make sure those telephone
2487 companies know much more about those businesses both so that
2488 they are legit and, if there is an issue, we can then track
2489 it back. So I think Congress could potentially legislate
2490 more on the KYC, know your customer, rules to strengthen

2491 those even further. But there is some room for the FCC to
2492 push, and we are going to do that.

2493 *Mrs. Cammack. Well, and I know so many of these
2494 robocalls and some of these scam texts originate from
2495 overseas. We have really graduated from the Nigerian prince
2496 who just needs \$5,000 and then he will, you know, make you a
2497 millionaire. We have really graduated --

2498 *Mr. Carr. Yes.

2499 *Mrs. Cammack. -- the scams, right? Talk to me about
2500 your coordination efforts with your counterparts overseas and
2501 what we need to do here in Congress to strengthen that.

2502 *Mr. Carr. Well, one idea that we are pursuing at the
2503 FCC is the idea that if you get a call on your phone from
2504 abroad, it shouldn't necessarily, in my view, display a U.S.-
2505 based area code, because that could mislead someone to think
2506 that this is a call originating in the U.S. So if you are a
2507 company and you want to have a call center overseas, at least
2508 be truthful and honest with your customers. So we are
2509 looking at that.

2510 We are looking at potentially doing standards for call
2511 centers to make sure that foreign call centers are compliant
2512 with our customer service regulations. And so there is a lot
2513 of efforts we are taking on that front.

2514 *Mrs. Cammack. I love it. So again, for folks watching
2515 back home, the Trump Administration under your leadership is

2516 tackling robocalls and scam texts. That is something every
2517 American can get behind. I love that.

2518 So I want to in my last 30 seconds talk about the letter
2519 that Chairman Hudson sent talking about broadcast ownership
2520 caps. Now, there is some debate about whether or not the FCC
2521 has the authority to do this on their own or not. And I
2522 would like to get your thoughts in the final 20 seconds that
2523 I have on the clock.

2524 *Mr. Carr. Well, on the authority, this question has
2525 been brought up to the D.C. Circuit already, and the D.C.
2526 Circuit said that 39 percent is the starting point for the
2527 FCC's analysis. So I don't think the legal authority issues
2528 are that compelling, but we are still looking at it to see if
2529 the FCC wants to change its position on that.

2530 And again, I think we are still open minded. But again,
2531 we are cognizant of this idea that you have got licensed
2532 local broadcasters. And I know I am out of time, but I
2533 think, as a Congress, it is important that we figure out, do
2534 we want investment in local news? Because right now you have
2535 got, you know, Comcast and Disney that are programing almost
2536 100 percent of the content that Americans are seeing. And
2537 how do we incentivize the local TV stations to continue to
2538 generate their own local news and information?

2539 *Mrs. Cammack. Absolutely. We are not in the business
2540 of supporting monopolies, so I appreciate that. And with

2541 that, my time is expired. Thank you to all our witnesses for
2542 being with us.

2543 I yield.

2544 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you. The gentlelady yields.
2545 The chair recognizes Representative Landsman for his five
2546 minutes of questions.

2547 *Mr. Landsman. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to
2548 the ranking member, FCC leadership for being here.

2549 I want to focus on three big things: the first has to
2550 do with corporate consolidation and costs; the second has to
2551 do with corruption and what tends to be or often times you
2552 find behind the consolidation of these companies; and the
2553 third is the overall issue of independence and the impact it
2554 has on the American people.

2555 When you all continue -- or Mr. Carr continue -- to
2556 approve the acquisitions of these big companies, which is the
2557 direction that I am seeing the FCC take at the moment, we
2558 will see higher costs, right?

2559 I mean, when somebody controls the market they increase
2560 costs on consumers, so cable costs go up, streaming fees,
2561 subscription fees. And the corruption piece is what,
2562 obviously, worries so many of us as we are seeing this play
2563 out. I am going to just focus on David and Larry Ellison.

2564 They, David, has -- is the CEO of -- now of Skydance,
2565 Paramount or Paramount, Skydance, whatever it is. But they -

2566 - Skydance was going after Paramount and CBS. In the midst
2567 of all of this, \$16 million goes to Trump to settle this
2568 legal issue, \$20 million goes to Trump for free ads, he gets
2569 all these editorial concessions.

2570 Larry, David's father, runs Oracle. Oracle is the OG of
2571 all of this. So in Trump's first term, you know, Larry and
2572 David give a ton of money to Trump, and Larry gets a no-bid
2573 contract at the VA with Oracle. It has been an absolute
2574 disaster, and we have been trying to figure out how to fix
2575 it, spending tens of billions of dollars to try to deal with
2576 Oracle having been the wrong vendor.

2577 So the question I have, as you are the sort of traffic
2578 cop trying to figure this out and make sure that there isn't
2579 corruption, as you are looking at the deal now with David
2580 trying to go after Warner Brothers, how much -- and this is
2581 just David and Larry Ellison -- how much have David and Larry
2582 Ellison given to the Trump coin, Mr. Carr?

2583 *Mr. Carr. I don't know the answer to that.

2584 *Mr. Landsman. Okay. How much money have they given to
2585 Trump businesses? Just Larry and David Ellison.

2586 *Mr. Carr. I am not sure why I would know that
2587 information.

2588 *Mr. Landsman. Last one, the MAGA, Inc., the big -- you
2589 know, Super PAC. Do you know how much money they have given?

2590 *Mr. Carr. No, sir.

2591 *Mr. Landsman. So the reason you should know, and the
2592 reason the American people should know, is because ultimately
2593 you are going to weigh in on these acquisitions, and there is
2594 going to be questions about whether or not there is
2595 corruption behind these corporate mergers. So it is really
2596 important for us to know how much these people are giving to
2597 the President.

2598 On the issue of independence, I -- the concern is -- and
2599 Ms. Gomez, just very briefly, what is the impact to the
2600 American people when we don't have an independent FCC? Just
2601 how does it hurt them?

2602 *Ms. Gomez. It is important to have an independent FCC
2603 because we are an expert-driven body that is supposed to make
2604 decisions based on our technical expertise, and also to have
2605 the respect both domestically and internationally of those
2606 that we regulate and are -- those with whom we work. When we
2607 lose that, people will second guess everything we do because
2608 they will just assume we are controlled by the whims of one
2609 person.

2610 *Mr. Landsman. So to that point about the being
2611 controlled by the whims of one person, Mr. Carr -- and this
2612 is where, like -- this is -- you are probably going to hate
2613 this question, but it is -- a genuine question that we are
2614 all struggling with is, when we see the administration folks
2615 go out and do some of the stuff on behalf of the President,

2616 is it -- do you do it -- do you go after the media folks,
2617 like, to keep Trump happy because that is what is key to,
2618 like, keeping your job? Or are you genuinely going to punish
2619 them for criticizing Trump?

2620 *Mr. Carr. The FCC has an obligation to make sure that
2621 broadcasters comply with their public interest obligations.
2622 Licenses, broadcast licenses, are not property rights, and
2623 there is things you can do to lose your broadcast license.

2624 Broadcasters are fundamentally different than any other
2625 forms of distribution, whether it is cable or podcast or --

2626 *Mr. Landsman. Yes, I am going to reclaim my time. I
2627 think it is probably a little bit of both, but either way it
2628 is scaring Americans, and it is hugely problematic in terms
2629 of the future work of the FCC.

2630 With that I yield back.

2631 *Mr. Hudson. [Presiding.] Thank you. The chair now
2632 recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, for five
2633 minutes to ask your questions.

2634 *Mr. Pfluger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate
2635 the work that you all are doing. It is a very important,
2636 obviously, time in our country.

2637 Chairman Carr, thank you for your leadership. In 2021
2638 you proposed a multi-year spectrum calendar that auctioned
2639 specific megahertz across several bands. I asked your
2640 predecessor about issuing a spectrum calendar, but she

2641 declined, stating that the Commission cannot produce one
2642 because Spectrum Auction Authority had lapsed.

2643 Thankfully, as has been discussed already today, we were
2644 able in the Working Families Tax Cut Act to allow the FCC to
2645 auction off 800 megahertz of spectrum for commercial
2646 broadband use by 2034. So I am very excited about that, and
2647 I would ask you that, now that the Commission is in full
2648 swing and the auction authority has been restored, give us an
2649 idea of what that long-term spectrum calendar looks like and
2650 other items that you are pursuing along those lines.

2651 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman, for the question.

2652 As you noted, we now have a concrete, 800 megahertz
2653 spectrum pipeline, and the FCC's work is well underway. We
2654 are going to hold the first auction in a number of years in
2655 the first half of this year, AWS-3 spectrum. Then next up we
2656 are finalizing rules for the upper C-band, which will clear
2657 at least 100 megahertz. We have sought comment on clearing
2658 up to 180 megahertz. There is also active work underway on
2659 the 7 gigahertz band, on the 2.7 gigahertz band, and even on
2660 license. Again, this month alone we are voting to
2661 supercharge WiFi by allowing higher power devices.

2662 And in addition to all of that, we are clearing the
2663 barriers in the secondary market so spectrum that wasn't
2664 fully loaded that could have been sitting fallow, is moving
2665 into the hands of carriers that are loading it and lighting

2666 it up and increasing speed. So again, we are seeing increase
2667 of speeds, decrease of prices, and enhanced competition.

2668 *Mr. Pfluger. That is great to hear.

2669 Commissioner Trusty, what does that mean for national
2670 security needs? Had we not passed that and not been able to
2671 get those 800 megahertz out, I mean, what does this do for
2672 our competition with China and national security issues?

2673 *Ms. Trusty. Sure. Well, it means that we are left
2674 behind. Now that we have auction authority and a long-term
2675 spectrum pipeline, we can meet the growing demands of
2676 wireless services, public safety, national security, and
2677 emerging technologies. And we can fully participate in the
2678 WRC 2027, which is absolutely critical to promoting American
2679 values, our economic competitiveness, and national security
2680 by having a foundation to develop a unified strategy and so
2681 on.

2682 So I really appreciate the leadership of the
2683 subcommittee.

2684 *Mr. Pfluger. You read my mind on the next question,
2685 which was WRC 2027 and the steps that we are taking to
2686 support the U.S. position and be prepared for that and show
2687 some leadership.

2688 I will give both of you guys a chance to answer on that.

2689 *Ms. Trusty. Okay, sure. So I think this is really
2690 important, and I think the focus should be on aligning public

2691 and private-sector interests. We also should be engaged in
2692 pre-WRC coordination with our international allies so that we
2693 can harmonize our preferred standards and technologies. And
2694 I think we need to work with Congress to ensure that we have
2695 the resources to support our technical and diplomatic
2696 representation needs.

2697 As you know, the WRC 2027 is in Shanghai, China, which
2698 creates some unique security challenges for us. The State
2699 Department is taking the lead working with the ITU and with
2700 Commission staff and NTIA to resolve those challenges. But
2701 again, we need to be fully engaged in this conference so that
2702 we can win when it comes to our economic and national
2703 security.

2704 *Mr. Pfluger. That is fantastic.

2705 Chairman Carr, let me pivot just a little bit. I want
2706 to kind of talk about the public interest and the
2707 responsibility that you all have as commissioners to protect
2708 the public interest, and just give you some time to explain
2709 what that means to our country for the licenses that you hand
2710 out, especially broadcast licenses.

2711 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman.

2712 So broadcasters are unique among all other distributors
2713 of information or even data. They have a license given them
2714 by the Federal Government, and that necessarily means the
2715 government has excluded other voices that might have wanted

2716 to use those airwaves. And so they have an obligation to
2717 stand not just in their own shoes, but in the shoes of their
2718 entire community of license. And that means they have to
2719 operate differently than a cable channel or a podcast or
2720 social media.

2721 And what has been interesting to me is that, on the
2722 Democrat side, there is a lot of simply projection and
2723 distortion. If you go back to the Biden years, there was
2724 actual weaponization of the FCC in communications policy. As
2725 we noted, there was members of this committee that wrote
2726 letters to cable companies to pressure them to drop
2727 conservative channels simply because they were viewed, in
2728 their words, as right-wing media outlets. You had Democrats
2729 in Congress write a letter to the FCC asking it to
2730 investigate the news activities of Sinclair Broadcast because
2731 they disagreed with the views of Sinclair. They viewed that
2732 they were right-wing, and there has been discussion about
2733 nothing negative happened after that letter. There were 227
2734 routine Sinclair licenses that came up for renewal or pending
2735 during the Biden years, and all but 1 of those -- so 226 --
2736 were not renewed by the FCC. That was unprecedented. It had
2737 never happened before. So Democrats put pressure, and it
2738 engendered results.

2739 What we are doing is applying the public interest
2740 standard in an even-handed way. And for people that

2741 benefitted from the weaponization during the Biden years,
2742 that may feel like discrimination, but it doesn't make it so.

2743 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

2744 *Mr. Pfluger. I yield back.

2745 *Mr. Hudson. The chair now recognizes the gentlelady
2746 from Florida, Ms. Castor, for five minutes to ask your
2747 questions.

2748 *Ms. Castor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to
2749 our FCC commissioners.

2750 The FCC plays a very important role to ensure
2751 communication services and WiFi is affordable for American
2752 families and available.

2753 Commissioner Gomez, your -- the takeaway from your
2754 testimony, if I can summarize it, is now the Commission is
2755 spending less time on consumer needs and has diverted its
2756 attention to powerful special interests. It does appear --
2757 and I share your concern -- that the FCC has taken a tact
2758 that will make life more expensive for American families at a
2759 time when they are being crushed by the rising cost of
2760 living. And one example of this is what the FCC has done to
2761 make it harder and more expensive for students to access the
2762 WiFi they need to -- under E-Rate that provides affordable
2763 WiFi to students in K through 12 schools and to libraries and
2764 to families.

2765 This is so important to bridge the digital divide. I

2766 mean, all of us here, you would -- maybe you would scoff that
2767 -- the availability of WiFi because it is ubiquitous for
2768 folks who can afford it. But there are so many students and
2769 families that can't afford WiFi right now.

2770 You have -- you opposed the ripping away of those E-Rate
2771 dollars for certain students. Why?

2772 *Ms. Gomez. That is correct. We need to make sure that
2773 broadband is accessible to everyone, and part of that is
2774 ensuring that it is affordable. And there are a lot of
2775 families for whom it is not affordable to have broadband
2776 access.

2777 So we had the Affordable Connectivity Program, which was
2778 the most successful nationwide program to ensure
2779 affordability. But sadly, we ran out of funds for that. So
2780 the next action that the FCC takes under this administration
2781 is to rip away the hotspots and the WiFi on school busses for
2782 students. And the hotspots are also handed out by libraries,
2783 and these are often the only means that people have to access
2784 the most important communications medium of the 21st century,
2785 and that is broadband. They need that in order to be
2786 digitally literate so they can participate in the artificial
2787 intelligence economy, as well. And they need it in order to
2788 apply for jobs, in order for students to do their homework,
2789 in order for seniors to get their health care appointments.
2790 Everything is online. We need access for everyone.

2791 *Ms. Castor. And rather than focus on lowering costs
2792 for Americans, it is very concerning that the FCC chair is
2793 using the regulatory power to stifle criticism of the
2794 President and change news coverage to please the President.
2795 Beyond heavy-handed, it is dangerous and wrong.

2796 Going back to the Skydance acquisition of Paramount and
2797 CBS, Chairman Carr blatantly acted to enrich the President
2798 and to boost him after months of regulatory delay. The FCC
2799 approved the acquisition just days after Paramount agreed to
2800 pay \$16 million to settle the President's meritless lawsuit
2801 attacking standard editorial edits at 60 Minutes. And then,
2802 in exchange for obtaining FCC's approval of this deal, Trump
2803 was also offered \$20 million in free advertising and a host
2804 of dangerous editorial concessions, including a promise to
2805 root out perceived bias, align its editorial practices to
2806 better suit the Trump Administration's political agenda, and
2807 hire an ombudsman to police the news organization's editorial
2808 choices. This was a bribe by any other name, and Chairman
2809 Carr rubber-stamped it.

2810 The consequences of these concessions were on full
2811 display last month, when the new CBS news editor-in-chief
2812 pulled a 60 Minutes story on allegations of abuse at an El
2813 Salvadorian prison, where President Trump has deported
2814 hundreds of Venezuelans without due process. Notably,
2815 President Trump had numerous conversations with David

2816 Ellison, now chairman and CEO of Paramount-Skydance, and his
2817 father, Larry Ellison, executive chairman of Oracle, leading
2818 up to the merger's approval. But conveniently, none of these
2819 interactions were memorialized in the FCC's docket, as
2820 required by law.

2821 A corruption out in the open does not mitigate its
2822 odious nature and, Mr. Chairman, the American taxpayers
2823 deserve so much better. I yield back my time.

2824 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
2825 gentleman from Texas, Mr. Goldman, for five minutes to ask
2826 your questions.

2827 *Mr. Goldman. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very
2828 much. Thank you to all the panelists for being here.

2829 Chairman Carr, broadband deployment, obviously, a major
2830 thing in Texas, especially rural Texas. Can you give us an
2831 update of where we are on broadband deployment across
2832 America, but mainly in rural America?

2833 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman. Thanks for your
2834 leadership on this issue.

2835 We are very quickly turning things around, and the
2836 Commerce Department has this \$42 billion program that they
2837 have righted the ship on, and we are moving forward with
2838 that. We are engaging in permitting reform at the FCC. We
2839 have a universal service program that is supporting high-
2840 speed builds, and we are bringing new technologies into the

2841 market.

2842 This next generation of connectivity includes
2843 connectivity directly to your smartphone at a high-speed
2844 internet level to a Low Earth Orbit satellite. And we are
2845 taking steps right now at the FCC to position the United
2846 States to lead the world in this new technology. So we are
2847 seeing more competition coming online. That is why, again,
2848 you are seeing prices going down, speeds coming up,
2849 competition enhancing. There is no way we are raising the
2850 mission accomplished flag. We have to keep pushing harder
2851 until every single community has what they need for next
2852 generation connectivity.

2853 *Mr. Goldman. And so looking towards the future, what
2854 are we looking at, months? Years? You know, to have better
2855 connectivity across America, what in your mind -- what does
2856 that look like?

2857 *Mr. Carr. We are seeing it right now. We are seeing
2858 it this year with shovels going into the ground. We are
2859 seeing it with the secondary markets, as we are encouraging
2860 spectrum to move so that it can be loaded up.

2861 And right now we have secondary market transactions that
2862 folks are turning on their new cell sites immediately. Just
2863 one provider last year took spectrum they gained access to
2864 that year alone and lit up 23,000 new cell sites, boosting
2865 speeds by 80 percent. So we are pushing on this from a

2866 technology perspective, from a funding perspective, and
2867 coordinating with the other components of the Federal
2868 Government that also have funding.

2869 *Mr. Goldman. Okay, thank you. And I was going to ask
2870 before Representative Cammack did about robocalls. Anything
2871 further to expand on what we can do to -- I mean, there are
2872 many constituents of mine that would love to eliminate
2873 robocalls. Is that even a possibility? Or how can we do a
2874 better job of making sure that our constituents aren't
2875 bothered by robocalls?

2876 *Mr. Carr. Yes, robocalls are a significant
2877 technological challenge. Historically, it felt like the FCC
2878 was a game of Whac-a-Mole. We would find one technology, one
2879 type of scam, and we would shut it down.

2880 Right now what we are trying to do is get down lower and
2881 look at every single portion of the life cycle of a call and
2882 take action, including making it clear that if you are not
2883 doing your part as a carrier you are going to get kicked out
2884 of the robocall mitigation database, which effectively makes
2885 them unable to deliver traffic. And we have a particular
2886 focus right now on foreign-originated robocalls, as well.

2887 *Mr. Goldman. Great, thank you. I know you have heard
2888 from the Texas Farm Bureau in regards to your drone ban. Can
2889 you speak upon that, and is there a solution in sight?

2890 Obviously, many Texas farmers and ranchers like their

2891 drones, and like flying them. It is better for their
2892 operations. Can you speak about the ban, and is there a
2893 solution for the farmers and ranchers of Texas in using
2894 drones?

2895 *Mr. Carr. At the end of last year national security
2896 agencies came together and made a determination, a specific
2897 termination, that foreign-produced drones presented an
2898 unacceptable threat to U.S. national security. And President
2899 Trump has been clear that we are going to reestablish
2900 American drone dominance. We have taken a couple steps.

2901 One, because of that national security determination, we
2902 added foreign-produced drones to our covered list. But that
2903 doesn't mean that consumers that have these drones today
2904 can't continue to use them. They can continue to use them
2905 today. In fact, if you have a model that was already
2906 authorized by the FCC, you can buy a new version of that same
2907 model device. The cover list only applies to new models that
2908 might seek authorization in the future.

2909 Subsequently, we have also taken some additional action
2910 from advice by the Pentagon and others, DHS, that drones are
2911 on the UAS blue list are cleared to go through the process.
2912 We have also created a mechanism where people can petition
2913 for additional clarity around the types of drones.

2914 So again, if you have a drone today that you are using,
2915 you can continue to use, it and you can even buy another one

2916 of the same drone you have today under the same model number.

2917 *Mr. Goldman. Right. Okay, thank you very much.

2918 And you were recently at the Consumer Electronics Show?

2919 *Mr. Carr. Yes, sir.

2920 *Mr. Goldman. What was the coolest or scariest thing
2921 you saw?

2922 [Laughter.]

2923 *Mr. Carr. Well, I think, you know, one of things I am
2924 most excited about is AI getting continued to be embedded in
2925 new technology. And again, President Trump has made clear
2926 that the U.S. is going to lead the world on this. And we
2927 have a job, as sort of the pipes and tubes people, to make
2928 sure that we have those high-speed internet connections so
2929 that AI can flourish in this country.

2930 *Mr. Goldman. Great. Thank you.

2931 Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time. Thank
2932 you.

2933 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
2934 gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Menendez, for five minutes to
2935 ask your questions.

2936 *Mr. Menendez. Thank you, Chairman.

2937 In today's world, high-speed connectivity is no longer a
2938 luxury. It is essential to how Americans work, learn, access
2939 health services, and stay connected to their families and
2940 communities. Expanding affordable, high-speed broadband

2941 access across the country is essential to ensuring that
2942 American families can thrive in the digital economy.

2943 Commissioner Gomez, just yes or no, is the FCC's role to
2944 ensure that every American, regardless of where they live or
2945 their background, has access to reliable, high-speed
2946 communications services?

2947 *Ms. Gomez. Yes.

2948 *Mr. Menendez. Thank you. And is ensuring that
2949 Americans have affordable connectivity and access to digital
2950 equity programs critical to the FCC fulfilling that role?

2951 *Ms. Gomez. Yes.

2952 *Mr. Menendez. Thank you. Before President Trump
2953 appointed Chairman Carr head of the Commission, the FCC made
2954 real strides in expanding broadband access. Since then many
2955 of those critical efforts have been stopped or been rolled
2956 back.

2957 Commissioner Gomez, would you say the FCC's rollback of
2958 programs and initiatives that support affordable broadband
2959 and digital equity has undermined the FCC's mission to
2960 deliver broadband access to every community?

2961 *Ms. Gomez. I would.

2962 *Mr. Menendez. Thank you. I agree. That is why I am
2963 so concerned that under Chairman Carr's leadership the FCC
2964 has deviated from its core mission.

2965 Further, since President Trump took office, we have seen

2966 the FCC's independence weakened.

2967 Chairman Carr, you authored the FCC's section of Project
2968 2025, in which you state on page 845, "The FCC is an
2969 independent regulatory agency.'" Is that correct?

2970 *Mr. Carr. Oh, I authored that in my personal capacity.
2971 I don't say this to dodge, it is just a --

2972 *Mr. Menendez. It is --

2973 *Mr. Carr. Just as a point of --

2974 *Mr. Menendez. But you did. You did. I understand --

2975 *Mr. Carr. Just as a point of clarification, I just
2976 want to --

2977 *Mr. Menendez. Prior to you being named chairman, you
2978 had written that the FCC was an independent regulatory
2979 agency.

2980 I am going to continue. And Chairman Carr, just yes or
2981 no, did you testify before the Senate Commerce Committee on
2982 December 17, 2025? Just yes or no.

2983 [No response.]

2984 *Mr. Menendez. Yes, I believe you did. It is in the
2985 record. And at that hearing you testified in response to a
2986 question from Senator Ben Ray Lujan that the FCC is no longer
2987 an independent agency. And you reiterated that point earlier
2988 today.

2989 Prior to the Senator's question, the FCC website was
2990 clear that the Commission is an independent agency. But

2991 shortly after your response, this language was removed from
2992 the website, as displayed here.

2993 [Slide.]

2994 *Mr. Menendez. Chairman Carr, did you decide in the
2995 middle of the hearing to officially abandon the FCC's
2996 independence, or had that decision already been made by you
2997 and President Trump prior to the hearing?

2998 *Mr. Carr. This is an important conversation. So the
2999 way --

3000 *Mr. Menendez. Yes, and my question is just on timing.
3001 So did you make that decision during the hearing or prior to
3002 the hearing? Because it was this -- because the website said
3003 prior to the hearing that it was an independent agency. You
3004 made a comment during the hearing, and then someone changed
3005 the website to say -- to make no reference to it being an
3006 independent agency. So I just want the American people to
3007 know, had that decision already been made when you walked
3008 into the hearing, or did you make that decision at the
3009 hearing?

3010 *Mr. Carr. I am pleased that the FCC's website reflects
3011 my views. And what I am saying --

3012 *Mr. Menendez. That the FCC is not an independent
3013 agency. That is correct, right? So your view was --
3014 entering the hearing, it was an independent agency. During
3015 the hearing, no longer an independent agency. So that is

3016 your view, that it is not an independent agency.

3017 *Mr. Carr. That is not correct. The independence is
3018 determined by a number of factors. It is multi-members, it
3019 is term of years. But the main key piece is can a
3020 commissioner be removed by the President for no reason or any
3021 reason. And historically, the view had been that courts
3022 would read into the Communications Act for cause removal
3023 protection that wasn't in the statute.

3024 *Mr. Menendez. Okay, so let's just --

3025 *Mr. Carr. But now the view of the courts --

3026 *Mr. Menendez. Let's just talk about the independence,
3027 speaking to --

3028 *Mr. Carr. -- the FCC is not --

3029 *Mr. Menendez. So I understand you are trying to make
3030 the case for what independence --

3031 *Mr. Carr. -- my view on that --

3032 *Mr. Menendez. -- could be made. But you no longer
3033 clearly want to say that it is an independent agency and just
3034 be up front about it, as you did in Project 2025, as you did
3035 on the website entering that hearing. So it is just a
3036 question of were you misleading the American people because a
3037 decision had been made, or it was something that you had
3038 previously discussed with Trump.

3039 On the issue of independence, you talk about
3040 broadcasters public interest standard, and we have listed a

3041 number of instances where the FCC has gone after
3042 broadcasters. Can you tell the committee what investigations
3043 or actions the FCC has taken for coverage of Democrats that
3044 the FCC has disagreed with? Because there has been a number
3045 of things for President Trump. But what have you done that
3046 you have -- that the FCC has thought was in violation of the
3047 public interest standard as it relates to coverage of
3048 Democrats?

3049 *Mr. Carr. The FCC right now has investigations into
3050 NPR, PBS, CBS --

3051 *Mr. Menendez. Regarding their coverage of Democrats?
3052 Regarding their coverage of Democrats. That is a question.
3053 Not the number of investigations. Regarding the coverage of
3054 Democrats, are there specific investigations specifically to
3055 the coverage of Democrats? Because there is a number of
3056 Republicans -- for Republicans and Trump. What are you doing
3057 with respect to the coverage of Democrats that shows that it
3058 is fair, balanced, and you are not picking winners and
3059 losers? Just tell me what you are doing.

3060 *Mr. Carr. We don't have investigations that are
3061 targeting Republicans or Democrats. We have investigations
3062 that are focused --

3063 *Mr. Menendez. Well, you have been clear about this.
3064 And you have been lauded by the President for going after
3065 people who disagree with the President's policies or who

3066 articulate positions that differ from the President's
3067 policies. I am just wondering --

3068 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time is expired.

3069 *Mr. Menendez. -- to show that you are balanced, what
3070 are you doing to show the American people that you continue
3071 to be an independent agency by going after agencies and
3072 broadcasters in a fair and balanced way? We know you are
3073 not, and that is why I am glad that you are here. But we
3074 need to have more of these conversations.

3075 I yield back.

3076 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired. If the
3077 chairman would like to respond, I would give you a few
3078 seconds.

3079 *Mr. Carr. I would say we have a range of different
3080 investigations that are underway right now. We are enforcing
3081 the public interest standard, and that is the work that we
3082 are doing.

3083 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3084 gentlelady from North Dakota, Representative Fedorchak, for
3085 five minutes to ask your questions.

3086 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want
3087 to step back and talk a little bit about the great work that
3088 is being done in combination with the President, your agency,
3089 and Congress.

3090 For the first time in four years we are having spectrum

3091 auctions. That was completely ignored by the last
3092 administration, at the peril of our country in very serious
3093 races against China on some of these technology fronts.
3094 Unleashing BEAD funding to help connect America to broadband.
3095 Deregulation, driving down costs, 1,000 regulations
3096 eliminated by your work alone. Modernizing satellite
3097 regulations. And protecting vital submarine cables. Those
3098 are just a few of the great things that are already being
3099 done, and it has only been a year. So thank you for your
3100 leadership. Thank you for delivering on many of the tools
3101 that Congress passed and gave you in the One Big, Beautiful
3102 Bill. It is going to make a real difference to everyday
3103 Americans.

3104 With that I want to pivot a little bit to a couple
3105 issues that are really important to my state, Universal
3106 Service Funding. Chairman Carr, North Dakota has been a
3107 leader in using Universal Service Funding to help connect our
3108 state. We have one of the largest rural state broadband
3109 deployments of any place in the country. So for anybody
3110 looking to do that great work, North Dakota is a model on how
3111 it can be done.

3112 But moving forward, there is still a lot of uncertainty
3113 in the long-term plan for securing universal service, the
3114 Universal Service Fund. What -- how should we be thinking
3115 about this? And what should Congress be doing? What sort of

3116 recommendations do you have?

3117 *Mr. Carr. Well, thank you, Congresswoman, and thanks
3118 for your leadership. I had a chance to visit North Dakota
3119 and see the great progress that is being made there. And
3120 obviously, there is much more work we need to do.

3121 There are several actions we are taking on universal
3122 service. One is taking a look at our high-cost programs.
3123 And how do we make sure that, in this idea of a high cost
3124 2.0, what is the future of high-cost support look like? And
3125 we are going to be asking some questions about that. We are
3126 also looking at ways to make sure we bring new technologies
3127 online, including Low Earth Orbit satellites, freeing up
3128 spectrum, and permitting reform. I think all of those
3129 combined is why you see us finally turning things around with
3130 prices coming down, with speeds going up, and with
3131 construction projects finally getting underway.

3132 *Mrs. Fedorchak. How should we be working to stabilize
3133 the fund, though?

3134 *Mr. Carr. The bicameral working group that the House
3135 and the Senate is involved in, I think, can play a really
3136 constructive role. We talked in the Senate hearing last --
3137 at the end of last year about the FCC collaborating with that
3138 group, and I think we are going to start that process,
3139 potentially, as soon as this month to make sure that we are
3140 coordinated there.

3141 *Mrs. Fedorchak. And the timeline on that, how urgent
3142 is it to get some certainty here in this long-term funding
3143 pool?

3144 *Mr. Carr. Yes, when you look at the lifecycle of
3145 investments, particularly for rural broadband, it is over
3146 many, many years. And so we need to be able to step in and
3147 provide that long-term sustainability for these programs.

3148 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Okay, very good. I want to pivot a
3149 little bit. You mentioned the low Earth satellites, Low
3150 Earth Orbit satellites. The University of North Dakota just
3151 last year launched its ROADS satellite mission, which
3152 established a dedicated satellite operations training
3153 facility at the University of North Dakota. I would like to
3154 see more of this type of work, particularly with regard to
3155 competing with China.

3156 So how should Congress think about the FCC's role in
3157 this space, in particular in relation to competition with
3158 China and around the LEO satellites, Earth stations, and ITU
3159 coordination?

3160 *Mr. Carr. Well, China has made clear that they want to
3161 dominate when it comes to the delivery of NextGen services
3162 from space. They are, predictably, copying a lot of the
3163 technologies from U.S. providers. So one thing we have to do
3164 is go as fast as we can so there is nothing holding back
3165 America's innovators from launching new satellites, next

3166 generation satellites. And that is what we are doing. We
3167 are clearing out backlogs and we are moving much faster.

3168 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Are you working on the satellite
3169 licensing timelines, as well? I have heard that that is a
3170 program that is often a source of delay.

3171 *Mr. Carr. It is true. We are now working on a couple
3172 fronts. One, to eliminate whole categories of things that
3173 don't require either licenses or don't require certain types
3174 of lengthy coordinations. We are taking them out of the
3175 system, and we are moving to what we describe internally at
3176 the building as a much more assembly-like process, assembly-
3177 line-like process, so that we give people clear parameters to
3178 shoot for with their applications, and they hit the mark, and
3179 it moves on, and get away from sort of a bespoke review
3180 process that slowed things down. And we are seeing results.
3181 Again, this latest generation constellation that we approved,
3182 we went in about half the time as the prior one.

3183 *Mrs. Fedorchak. Very good. Mr. Chairman, if you need
3184 more tools from Congress, we are here to help. So thank you
3185 for your work.

3186 Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

3187 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3188 gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Carter, for five minutes to ask
3189 your questions.

3190 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and

3191 ranking members.

3192 Over the last year the Federal Communication Commission,
3193 under Brendan Carr's leadership, has recklessly abandoned its
3194 core principle to operate as an independent agency. Instead,
3195 it has weaponized its power to bully news organizations and
3196 broadcasters that disagree with the President on his
3197 political agenda. That is unfortunate. I stand firmly
3198 against this misuse of Federal power to suppress free speech,
3199 and will fight to protect everyone's First Amendment rights.

3200 Mr. Carr, at one point it appeared that you appreciated
3201 the First Amendment. At one point it appears that you
3202 recognized its value. Somewhere along the line you appeared
3203 to have lost your compass. That is unfortunate, because the
3204 American people deserve better. The American people deserve
3205 freedom of speech that allows expression without fear of
3206 retribution. That is not the America that we should have.
3207 We have a rule of law. We have a Constitution. We have
3208 those protections. And unfortunately, sir, you have failed
3209 in the regard of protecting those rights.

3210 So I am going to pivot, because I really don't have time
3211 for filibuster, and we have a need for questions to be
3212 answered. Commissioner, as the co-chair of the WiFi Caucus,
3213 I am encouraged by the FCC's continued commitment to
3214 dedicating the six gigahertz band for unlicensed use, which
3215 is essential for WiFi technologies. How critical is it for

3216 the FCC to ensure that sufficient spectrum remains available
3217 for unlicensed use to both support the continued growth and
3218 innovation of WiFi technologies and to help the U.S. remain
3219 competitive with China and the development of cutting-edge
3220 wireless technologies?

3221 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

3222 You know, unlicensed spectrum was an experiment decades
3223 ago, when I still worked at the FCC, and it has turned out to
3224 be an enormous benefit for our economy, for our global
3225 leadership in spectrum, and in technology. So it is
3226 important that we have sufficient unlicensed spectrum for
3227 WiFi and other such uses.

3228 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. What would happen in the case
3229 if we didn't have -- if there wasn't enough unlicensed
3230 spectrum accounts to anticipate increased usage in WiFi?

3231 *Ms. Gomez. Well, we don't want to choke off other
3232 services. For example, we all have WiFi in our homes. Well,
3233 it does us no good to have the gigabit speeds if we don't
3234 have WiFi that is capable within our own homes to give us the
3235 benefit of those gigabit speeds.

3236 It is also just really important for innovation. We
3237 have amazing innovative services that use WiFi and use
3238 connected devices throughout everything we do. And so we
3239 need to make sure we have sufficient spectrum to make sure
3240 that we can continue to evolve these technologies and support

3241 them.

3242 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. So of late we have heard the
3243 discussion about affordability, the importance of
3244 affordability, the importance of making sure that we see
3245 these tools that are no longer something that is luxury, but
3246 is a necessity. How does preserving and expanding access to
3247 unlicensed spectrum help advance affordability and digital
3248 opportunity for rural and underserved communities like that
3249 of my district?

3250 *Ms. Gomez. Yes, WiFi is a very important tool for
3251 giving access to everyone who needs access to broadband.
3252 Whether we get them through our library or we have students
3253 that are sitting in the parking lot of a McDonald's in order
3254 to access broadband, what WiFi has enabled is this type of
3255 accessibility, and it is very important that we continue to
3256 support it.

3257 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Under the Biden
3258 Administration, Louisiana, I am very proud to say, was number
3259 one. We were ready. We were ready for shovels in the ground
3260 with the BEAD program. Under the Trump Administration there
3261 was a drastic halt. And as a result of that halt, although
3262 it was said that it was intended -- that it was going to make
3263 things better, faster, we had "taken too long.'" But
3264 Louisiana was first, was ready. Our Republican governor
3265 hailed this as one of the most monumental infrastructure

3266 advances in Louisiana. Yet now we hear that -- from my
3267 colleagues -- I think Mr. Latta said a little while ago that
3268 thankfully we were able to stop this because things weren't
3269 moving fast enough.

3270 Well, in fact, we were moving fast enough and we had
3271 done all of the legwork through a Democratic governor and a
3272 Republican governor, only to be halted by this
3273 administration, which leaves us now with a far less superior
3274 product that is going to ultimately cost more money, and the
3275 people will get less service and an inferior product.

3276 Real briefly.

3277 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

3278 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Can --

3279 *Mr. Hudson. I will allow the witness to answer.

3280 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. You will let her answer?

3281 Thank you, sir.

3282 *Ms. Gomez. I will follow up.

3283 *Mr. Hudson. Go ahead.

3284 *Ms. Gomez. Oh, I am allowed to answer?

3285 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Yes, yes, you --

3286 *Ms. Gomez. I am sorry.

3287 *Mr. Hudson. Take a few seconds.

3288 *Ms. Gomez. Very quickly, yes, we are over a year since
3289 -- or about a year since this administration took over and
3290 complained about the amount of time that it took to deploy

3291 under the last administration. And yet they have now
3292 effectively added yet another year. So I am concerned that
3293 this administration has a race to the bottom in terms of what
3294 provision -- what technologies it is going to use to provide
3295 broadband service, and I am hopeful that the end outcome is
3296 that everyone gets the broadband they need to participate in
3297 the artificial intelligence economy.

3298 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you.

3299 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. And Mr. Chairman, I am going
3300 to submit for the record and ask that you have an opportunity
3301 to answer, because obviously NextGen 911 is a huge issue,
3302 making sure that we are providing opportunities for law
3303 enforcement to actually be able to access the greatest
3304 technologies that we have when, in fact, today they can't.

3305 [The information follows:]

3306

3307 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

3308

3309 *Mr. Hudson. I agree with you. That is why I let you
3310 go a little extra, but --

3311 [Laughter.]

3312 *Mr. Carter of Louisiana. Yes, sir.

3313 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3314 gentlelady from Indiana, Ms. Houchin, for five minutes to ask
3315 her questions.

3316 *Mrs. Houchin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to
3317 the ranking member for holding today's hearing and for the
3318 witnesses for being here.

3319 The Federal Communications Commission plays an integral
3320 role in closing the digital divide, promoting competition,
3321 and ensuring Americans can access reliable communication
3322 services that are essential for work, education, health care,
3323 and public safety. I am especially glad to welcome Chairman
3324 Carr and Commissioners Trusty and Gomez from the FCC here
3325 today.

3326 I also want to just commend the Trump Administration for
3327 finding \$21 billion in savings under the BEAD program, which
3328 I know is under Secretary Lutnick. But I do hope that that
3329 \$21 billion in savings on the BEAD program will be put toward
3330 deployment in a technology-neutral way, and that it might go
3331 even to updating our National Broadband Map, which is what I
3332 want to focus some of my comments on today.

3333 One of the most, I think, under-appreciated tools the

3334 FCC manages is the broadband map. We relied on it when I was
3335 a state legislator, as we were trying to roll out a broadband
3336 grant program that would avoid over-building in areas that
3337 already had access. It is a map that is increasingly relied
3338 upon not just by the FCC, but by other Federal agencies,
3339 state broadband offices, and communities across the country.
3340 It really shapes where taxpayer dollars go, how programs are
3341 designed, and, again, preventing over-building and making
3342 sure that we are actually reaching unserved Americans.

3343 But the map is inaccurate. And if it is inaccurate,
3344 then everything down from it is at risk. In April of 2025
3345 the GAO warned that Federal agencies are directing tens of
3346 billions of dollars in broadband funding based on the map,
3347 despite concerns about the accuracy of the data. The report
3348 issued six recommendations for the FCC related to broadband
3349 mapping and improving interagency coordination.

3350 Chairman Carr, where does the FCC stand today on
3351 implementing GAO's recommendations, particularly validating
3352 true access to broadband and strengthening the map?

3353 *Mr. Carr. Well, thank you, Congresswoman, for your
3354 leadership, including on these critical rural broadband
3355 issues.

3356 The FCC is working on all the recommendations there.
3357 And one thing that we have is we have a coordination
3358 agreement with NTIA and others to make sure that we are

3359 getting all of the data put in the map. For instance, as you
3360 have indicated, there is dozens and dozens of different
3361 broadband funding programs out there, and if we can make sure
3362 they all funnel their information through a single map, that
3363 will really help improve.

3364 The map itself is starting to stabilize. We are seeing
3365 the fabric start to stabilize. We are seeing more accuracy
3366 out of it. So I think we are heading in the right direction,
3367 but more work to do.

3368 *Mrs. Houchin. Thank you. You know, many of my
3369 colleagues and I, we are working on both sides of the aisle
3370 on legislation that does rely on the accuracy of the map.
3371 That includes my Data BRIDGE Act, which directs the FCC to
3372 incorporate USDA cultivated land data into the National
3373 Broadband Map, and this is important because in rural and
3374 agricultural areas we want to make sure that is mapped
3375 accurately so that funding reaches an entire farm or field,
3376 not just a farmhouse address and supporting connectivity in
3377 modern agriculture like precision ag.

3378 In the time I have remaining I do want to pivot to the
3379 broadcast policy, Chairman Carr, specifically the broadcast
3380 ownership cap. It is clear the landscape for media has
3381 changed over the last several decades, and many young
3382 Americans don't -- never experienced broadcast television,
3383 moving the rabbit ears on the television so you can get your

3384 five stations that you could watch. And many Americans
3385 really don't know the difference between Fox News Channel and
3386 Fox 59.

3387 Under the broadcast cap, what is the impact to local
3388 broadcasters if the cap is expanded or not? Why is that an
3389 important conversation to have?

3390 And a follow-up question -- and I will give you time to
3391 close out -- if big networks like NBC News, if they wanted to
3392 just get out of the broadcast business tomorrow and sell to
3393 conservative stations or any stations like Fox or Sinclair,
3394 wouldn't the broadband -- or wouldn't the -- sorry, wouldn't
3395 the broadcast ownership cap prevent that from happening? And
3396 is that in the public interest?

3397 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congresswoman. We are looking at
3398 a number of issues related to this right now, and we haven't
3399 made any final decision. We are still taking input.

3400 I think one of the things that I have been concerned
3401 about, to your point, is you have these licensed local
3402 broadcast stations that are supposed to be serving the needs
3403 of their individual communities. But over the last dozen-
3404 plus years, you have seen these large, national programmers,
3405 Comcast and Disney, that have just come to dominate those
3406 local TV stations. So when you turn on your local TV
3407 stations, almost the entire time now you are just viewing
3408 programs that have been produced in New York and Hollywood.

3409 And so we are looking at ways, structurally and
3410 otherwise, to potentially insert some more competition
3411 because I think, again, if we care as a country about local
3412 news and local reporting, we want healthy, local news
3413 stations. And it is expensive to produce local news.

3414 At the FCC we had this before. We had rules relating to
3415 investment in local newspapers, and we left those rules in
3416 place. And over time you saw investment decline, and now the
3417 shuttering of local news. So the touchstone has to be
3418 localism. Whether we, you know, go forward in this
3419 proceeding or not, we haven't made that decision yet.

3420 *Mrs. Houchin. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward
3421 to continuing to work with the FCC on broadband policies,
3422 ensuring that the data is accurate.

3423 I want to give a shout out to Commissioner Trusty for
3424 her work on Data BRIDGE. Thank you.

3425 I do know that my community does --

3426 *Mr. Hudson. The gentlelady's time is expired.

3427 *Mrs. Houchin. -- appreciate their local news, and I
3428 look forward to continuing to work together.

3429 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3430 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3431 gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Kelly, for five minutes to ask
3432 your questions.

3433 *Ms. Kelly. Thank you, Chair Hudson and Ranking Member

3434 Matsui, for holding this morning's hearing. And thanks to
3435 our witnesses for participating.

3436 This past year, the Trump Administration has threatened
3437 platforms' ability to responsibly moderate content by
3438 unlawfully weaponizing independent agencies such as the FCC.
3439 Rather than protecting consumers or fostering competition,
3440 this agency is now being weaponized in a calculated effort to
3441 sabotage the decisions of private entities and undermine
3442 online free speech. The FCC has repeatedly claimed to oppose
3443 censorship, yet its recent posture toward section 230 of the
3444 Communications Act reflects a sharp departure from the
3445 agency's traditional scope and legal limits. That
3446 inconsistency undermines public trust and places us in
3447 dangerous times.

3448 Chairman Carr, in Project 2025 you wrote the chapter on
3449 the FCC, in which you call for revisions to parts of section
3450 230 to counter what you saw as censorship and bias against
3451 conservatives by large technology companies. Chairman Carr,
3452 in Project 2025 you wrote, "The FCC has authority to
3453 interpret that law, and thus provide courts with guidance
3454 about the proper application of the statutory language."
3455 Your writing is also consistent with the FCC's general
3456 counsel's 2020 legal opinion that the FCC has the authority
3457 to interpret section 230.

3458 But there is no language in section 230 directing the

3459 FCC to enforce this law. And even if the language is
3460 ambiguous, in June 2024 the Supreme Court overturned Chevron
3461 deference and stated that courts need not and may not defer
3462 to an agency's interpretation of the law simply because a
3463 statute is ambiguous.

3464 So Chairman Carr, just yes or no, does the FCC still
3465 have the legal authority to interpret section 230? Just yes
3466 or no, please.

3467 *Mr. Carr. Section 230 is in the Communications Act,
3468 and there is provisions of the Communications Act that give
3469 us authority to interpret those terms. And so, yes, the FCC,
3470 generally speaking, has authority to implement provisions of
3471 the Communications Act.

3472 *Ms. Kelly. Thank you for your answer.

3473 Commissioner Gomez, do you agree with Chairman Carr that
3474 the FCC has the authority to interpret section 230? Last I
3475 checked, the FCC's website says the FCC does not regulate
3476 online content. Is that no longer correct?

3477 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question.

3478 Yes, I disagree. I don't think we have authority to --
3479 we definitely don't have authority to regulate online
3480 content, and we don't want to under the First Amendment.

3481 *Ms. Kelly. Thank you for your response.

3482 It is unfortunate that Mr. Carr is now determined to sit
3483 back and be America's speech police. If Brendan Carr, who

3484 tweeted whether it is the government shutting down speech or
3485 a private platform doing it, these decisions are not made by
3486 an oracle of truth, that is what -- that is -- that I wish
3487 would stand up.

3488 Thank you to the witnesses, and I yield back.

3489 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3490 gentleman from Idaho, Mr. Fulcher --

3491 *Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Mr. Chairman --

3492 *Mr. Hudson. -- for five minutes of questions.

3493 *Mr. Fulcher. -- and thank you to the panel for all
3494 your input today. And I have got a question for Commissioner
3495 Trusty, but I want to apologize in advance for some of us
3496 with dual commitments if some of this is a rerun. So bear
3497 with me here.

3498 But Commissioner Trusty, this has to do with spectrum
3499 auctions. And I come from the great State of Idaho. There
3500 is a lot of rural space in Idaho. And I just want to
3501 underscore the importance of wireless deployment in rural,
3502 underserved areas such as what I represent. And when it
3503 comes to spectrum auctions, have you got any ideas or input
3504 on what we can do to make sure that the small rural carriers
3505 get access to that, or somehow get included with those?

3506 *Ms. Trusty. Sure. Thank you for this question, and
3507 thank you for your leadership on this issue.

3508 Making sure small, rural providers can participate in

3509 spectrum auctions is critical to fostering competition and
3510 making sure we get high-speed wireless services to unserved
3511 and underserved areas in these rural communities.

3512 So for the AWS-3 spectrum auction that will be initiated
3513 in June, we have designated entities, small businesses, rural
3514 telecommunications companies who have bidding credits. So
3515 they get a discount on the spectrum. We are also proposing
3516 to offer bidding credits to small, rural telecommunications
3517 providers in the upper C-band auction, as that is being
3518 debated in the NPRM that is currently before us.

3519 *Mr. Fulcher. Okay, thank you. Great. Thank you for
3520 that.

3521 Commissioner Carr, first of all, thank you for your work
3522 in a lot of this related area, too. As you recall, there is
3523 a lot of Federal land in the West, and you have been helpful
3524 in helping us get access to some of that.

3525 I want to just put a plug in for legislation that I
3526 passed through this committee that, when it comes to
3527 deploying broadband infrastructure across previously
3528 disturbed Federal lands, that there is an exemption for that
3529 from NEPA if that is -- has to be disturbed again when it
3530 comes to broadband deployment. Is that something that you
3531 can support in terms of putting the infrastructure in place
3532 in rural areas?

3533 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman, for your leadership

3534 on these key permitting reform issues.

3535 We are looking right now at additional relief with
3536 respect to courts or otherwise overriding NEPA and
3537 environmental reviews to put needless reviews in place. We
3538 want to try to cut through that. And the work that you are
3539 doing in Congress and elsewhere is important to that.

3540 *Mr. Fulcher. It really does slow things down
3541 unnecessarily, in my view.

3542 And I am going to shift gears a little bit to a totally
3543 different topic, but GPS. We went through recently a
3544 Homeland Security review, and didn't realize just how much
3545 GPS was involved with many, many things. And one of the
3546 concerns that came up as part of that dialog was that we
3547 don't have a good redundancy system. There is not
3548 necessarily an auxiliary system. Are you looking at anything
3549 potentially to address that need in case there was a
3550 disruption of service to the GPS system?

3551 *Mr. Carr. Most Americans don't realize how dependent
3552 we are for GPS for precision navigation and timing. It is a
3553 great system, but it is a single point of failure.

3554 So one of the very first things that we did when I
3555 became chair is start the process of looking at standing up
3556 alternatives, a system of systems to GPS. I think it is
3557 important at the FCC that we keep moving forward to do our
3558 part to look at a range of different ways that we could stand

3559 up alternatives or complements to GPS.

3560 *Mr. Fulcher. We are told that some other countries
3561 have got some auxiliary systems. That is why I asked the
3562 question. Thank you for looking at that.

3563 I did have a question regarding broadcast ownership, but
3564 Congressman Houchin addressed that with you, and so I won't
3565 force you to repeat the response on that.

3566 Mr. Chairman, with that I yield.

3567 *Mr. Carr. Thanks.

3568 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3569 representative from Virginia, Ms. McClellan, for five minutes
3570 to ask your questions.

3571 *Ms. McClellan. Thank you, Chairman Hudson and
3572 Representative Ranking Member Matsui, for holding this very
3573 important hearing. And thank you to the commissioners for
3574 being here.

3575 I am probably the most excited about this hearing of any
3576 other hearing we have had thus far. I graduated law school
3577 one year after the Telecommunications Act of 1996 passed. I
3578 was one of the lawyers who worked on, I think, the only
3579 arbitration before the FCC under that Act. And I ended my
3580 legal career helping my client try to figure out how to
3581 provide inputs to the FCC broadband map. So I could spend
3582 hours, hours talking to you, asking questions about the FCC's
3583 critical role, how we can work together to modernize the

3584 Communications Act, how we can ensure Americans can
3585 communicate freely, affordably, reliably, how we can help
3586 with pole attachment issues, as someone who -- yes, I also
3587 climbed a telephone pole. But I only have five minutes.

3588 And so in this first conversation with you I want to
3589 focus on what I think is the FCC's most important role, and
3590 that is ensuring that the public, not political interference,
3591 remains at the center of our communications ecosystem, which,
3592 as you have heard today, there is a lot of concern about.
3593 Because since January of this year, at the behest of the
3594 President and under Chairman Carr's leadership, it appears
3595 the FCC has been pursuing a course that mirrors the goals of
3596 Project 2025, consolidating executive control, weaponizing
3597 regulatory authority, and pressuring speech and media that
3598 fall out of political favor with the President.

3599 These actions represent a clear departure from the FCC's
3600 historic mission, and a dangerous erosion of the guardrails
3601 that protect free speech. And that is why earlier this year
3602 I offered an amendment to our oversight plan that said that
3603 this committee would remain committed to investigating any
3604 instances of the FCC weaponizing this independent agency
3605 against the news media to settle the scores of the President
3606 or anyone else, because that is the epitome of abuse.

3607 And I noted in that hearing that our founding fathers
3608 believed that freedom of speech and the press are vital

3609 safeguards against government overreach and are crucial for
3610 an informed citizenry and democracy.

3611 George Mason wrote in the Virginia Declaration of
3612 Rights, the precursor to the Bill of Rights, that freedom of
3613 the press is one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty and can
3614 never be restrained but by despotic governments.

3615 James Madison said that for the people to rule wisely,
3616 they must be free to think and speak without fear of
3617 reprisal.

3618 Benjamin Franklin said that freedom of the speech is a
3619 principal pillar of a free government, and when this support
3620 is taken away the Constitution of a free society is
3621 dissolved.

3622 And I can't be a graduate of UVA and not quote Thomas
3623 Jefferson, who believed our liberty depends on the freedom of
3624 the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.

3625 And so you can see why we are so concerned about how the
3626 FCC conducts itself as it plays a critical role protecting
3627 these linchpins of American democracy.

3628 So Commissioner Gomez, as someone with a front row seat
3629 to how the FCC has operated under the Trump Administration
3630 and Chairman Carr's leadership, I want to commend you for
3631 your initiative, the 1st Amendment Tour, to challenge
3632 government censorship and control. And I want to know if you
3633 could share with us some of what you have heard from

3634 broadcasters, journalists, freedom of speech advocates while
3635 you have been traveling around the country.

3636 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for that question, Congresswoman.

3637 Yes, I have launched a 1st Amendment Tour because I have
3638 been so concerned about this administration's abuse of its
3639 regulatory authority in order to target content in the free
3640 press. And what I have heard from communities is a lot of
3641 concern, and this concern is bipartisan. It is across the
3642 ideological spectrum because freedom of speech and the
3643 freedom of the press is paramount to our democracy.

3644 I have also heard a lot of concerns about the level of
3645 consolidation and the capitulation of the corporate owners of
3646 these media companies in order to curry favor with this
3647 administration.

3648 *Ms. McClellan. And what have you heard from small and
3649 minority-owned broadcasters about the unique role that they
3650 play in delivering local news, music, and entertainment that
3651 reflect the voices of all communities and not just the
3652 majority community?

3653 *Ms. Gomez. Small broadcasters are really the salt of
3654 the Earth when it comes to serving their communities, and it
3655 is so important that we maintain a diversity of viewpoints
3656 that reflect the communities in which these broadcasters are
3657 serving.

3658 There is one thing I would like to correct for the

3659 record, and that is there are four national networks -- ABC,
3660 CBS, NBC, and Fox -- not just two. And the local
3661 broadcasters that are seeking to merge are actually corporate
3662 behemoths, not small local broadcasters.

3663 *Ms. McClellan. Okay. I thank you for that. I hope
3664 this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship with all of
3665 you, and we have lots of geeking out that we can do.

3666 And with that I yield back.

3667 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. The chair now recognizes the
3668 gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Kean, for five minutes to ask
3669 your questions.

3670 *Mr. Kean. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you,
3671 Chairman Carr, Commissioners Gomez and Trusty, for being here
3672 today.

3673 Chairman Carr, supporting first responders' ability to
3674 communicate with the public and with others is of critical
3675 importance. I was interested to see that in August of 2025
3676 the Commission released a notice of proposed rulemaking
3677 concerning the Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency
3678 Alerts. I agree that it is important that our nation's alert
3679 and warning systems are closely examined so that fire, EMS,
3680 and police personnel can communicate as effectively and as
3681 efficiently as possible. Can you provide an update on this
3682 process, and give an overview of your vision for the next
3683 generation of Wireless Alert System?

3684 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman. This is critical.
3685 In fact, the very first project I worked on at the FCC, all
3686 the way back in 2012 when I started at the agency, was on
3687 these types of emergency alerts. And if you look back over
3688 the years, sort of every different compilation of the
3689 Commission that comes in sort of adds something else on top
3690 of the existing system.

3691 And we haven't, at least in my view, stepped back and
3692 said, as a matter of first principles, if we were designing
3693 this system today with today's technology, how would we do
3694 it? And that is the point of what this is designed to do.
3695 It is a voluntary system, so we have to be careful about how
3696 much we put on top of that, but we are asking all of the
3697 questions as to how we make this work in the future.

3698 *Mr. Kean. Thank you. Chairman Carr, you spoke in
3699 support of direct-to-cell satellite connectivity. How can we
3700 strengthen coordination between the FCC and the private
3701 sector to expand the availability of direct-to-cell satellite
3702 communications?

3703 *Mr. Carr. Thank you, Congressman. We just spoke about
3704 geeking out, and this is something that I really geek out on.

3705 There is this new generation of connectivity where you
3706 can go straight from your smartphone right to a Low Earth
3707 Orbit satellite. And the Low Earth Orbit satellite is
3708 effectively like a cell tower in the sky. What that does is

3709 eliminates dead zone. If we have enough spectrum capacity
3710 for that, you can get truly high-speed service right to your
3711 phone anywhere. Or think about any type of device, as well.
3712 And so what we are doing right now is positioning the United
3713 States to lead the world in this new technology by making
3714 sure that we have the spectrum resources and the regulatory
3715 framework for this direct-to-cell technology to really
3716 flourish, and to flourish in America first.

3717 *Mr. Kean. So I believe it is very important that the
3718 U.S. maintain leadership in space. How can the FCC support
3719 updating regulations on satellite-based services within
3720 bodies like the International Telecommunications Union to
3721 remain dominant and to counteract anti-competitive efforts by
3722 other nations?

3723 *Mr. Carr. One of the touchstones of our spectrum and
3724 satellite policy through the years has been reciprocity. We
3725 have a lot of U.S.-based satellite providers, but there is a
3726 lot of European satellite providers that are doing business
3727 here in America. And I am concerned, as a general matter, if
3728 you look at some of the protectionist conduct that is taking
3729 place by European regulators, you see it all across the tech
3730 ecosystem, but we are seeing it rise with respect to
3731 satellite in particular.

3732 And I would simply remind my counterparts in Europe
3733 that, again, that reciprocity has been key to a successful

3734 regime. We want to make sure that U.S. satellite providers
3735 are treated fairly when they are doing business in Europe.

3736 *Mr. Kean. Thank you. And Chairman Carr, I appreciate
3737 the FCC's efforts to review regulations in order to
3738 streamline outdated and burdensome rules and to support
3739 American innovators.

3740 First, can you give us an update on the progress of the
3741 effort at large, and share any plans for deregulation in the
3742 coming year that you feel is important to support this
3743 effort?

3744 *Mr. Carr. We have launched the largest deregulatory
3745 effort in the agency's history. To date it is over 1,000
3746 different rules or regulations that have been either
3747 eliminated or teed up for elimination, over 2,000 inactive
3748 dockets. And we are going to continue to work away to get
3749 rid of substantive regulations that is holding back
3750 innovation.

3751 Again, just in a short year you are already seeing
3752 wireless prices come down, speeds increasing, competition
3753 enhancing, bridging the digital divide. This is the work
3754 that we are doing, and it is delivering real, tangible
3755 results for the American people. And we are just getting
3756 started.

3757 *Mr. Kean. So what is the best way for companies like
3758 those in New Jersey to most effectively engage with the FCC

3759 and offer their perspectives to make the delete-delete-delete
3760 effort as productive as possible?

3761 *Mr. Carr. One thing that we want is to hear from them
3762 directly about the types of rules and regulations that are
3763 holding them back. That is why I try to spend as much time
3764 outside the Beltway as possible in this job, meeting directly
3765 with broadband providers and tower climbers. And I ask them,
3766 you know, "What is holding you back?"

3767 One idea that we have heard is -- came up over here in
3768 legislation, which is railroad crossings. Again, it seems
3769 like a random issue, but that has, you know, substantively
3770 been holding back broadband builds in this country. So we
3771 want to hear directly from them what is slowing them down.

3772 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

3773 *Mr. Kean. Thank you. I yield back.

3774 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you, and I now recognize the last
3775 member of the subcommittee before we go to members who we
3776 welcome here who waived on.

3777 Mr. Obernolte from California, you are recognized for
3778 five minutes.

3779 *Mr. Obernolte. Well, thank you very much, Mr.
3780 Chairman.

3781 Chairman Carr, thank you for your testimony today. I
3782 want to start by adding my voice to the chorus of voices that
3783 you have heard in the hearing today about the FCC's broadcast

3784 ownership rules.

3785 Now, obviously, those rules were written in an era when
3786 broadcasters were just competing against other broadcasters.
3787 But now, in our digital era, we have broadcasters who compete
3788 about -- against players like social media platforms,
3789 streaming platforms. And although I myself am not an
3790 advocate of expanding the regulation to those entities, I
3791 think that we do have an obligation to keep a level playing
3792 field and make sure that we are not handicapping our
3793 broadcasters.

3794 So you are aware we sent you a letter last March on this
3795 topic. I was a signatory to that. I won't belabor the
3796 point, I know it has been brought up here before, but I just
3797 wanted to make sure that you knew how important that was to
3798 the members of the subcommittee.

3799 I also want to talk a little bit about the C-band
3800 auction that is coming up the middle of next year, you know,
3801 or before. As you are aware, in 2021 we had the auction of
3802 the lower -- for the lower C-band, and that had some pretty
3803 serious consequences for the aviation community in the use of
3804 radar altimeters, the interference with those radar
3805 altimeters, and that was unintended, it was kind of
3806 unforeseen, caused a lot of chaos. I am a pilot myself, so I
3807 got to experience some of that chaos firsthand. And I know
3808 that there are things that we wish we had done differently.

3809 So as we approach this upcoming auction for upper C-
3810 band, what is the FCC planning to do differently to make sure
3811 that we don't get a recurrence of that?

3812 *Mr. Carr. Well, thank you, Congressman, for the
3813 question.

3814 One thing that we are doing is working on the front end
3815 on deep collaboration and coordination with the aviation
3816 industry and our counterparts. So Administrator Bedford at
3817 the FAA, Secretary Duffy at DoT, the White House, myself, we
3818 are, you know, regularly in touch, regularly having meetings
3819 to work through this.

3820 We have a proceeding right now where we have sought
3821 comment on precisely these types of issues. We have a
3822 mandate from Congress to free more than -- or at least 100
3823 megahertz of spectrum. That is going to likely necessitate
3824 new standards for radio altimeters, some retrofitting of
3825 radio altimeters, and we are working through all of those
3826 issues right now about what is the standard. In fact, the
3827 FAA itself is working through their own rulemaking process,
3828 as well. And again, we are trying to line up all of these
3829 actions so that we are ready to go at the middle of next
3830 summer.

3831 But, you know, it is probably the biggest effort inside
3832 the FCC in terms of the amount of brainpower we have working
3833 on it. I know that the media issues get a lot of attention

3834 because the media likes to talk about the media, but in terms
3835 of the work of the building, C-band and all of the issues
3836 that you are talking about is a big workstream for us.

3837 *Mr. Obernolte. All right. I am glad to hear it. If I
3838 could urge you to, as you prepare for the auction, to
3839 consider this issue of mandatory retrofits of radar
3840 altimeters, first of all, always keeping in mind that -- I
3841 mean, to my understanding, we don't actually have a certified
3842 retrofit available yet. And even when we do, there is
3843 limited production capacity for those radar altimeters and
3844 limited avionics shop capacity. And so we have to have
3845 enough of a window to be able to retrofit the entire fleet
3846 that needs that new part to avoid that interference.

3847 And second of all, my understanding is that the bidders
3848 in this auction would likely be willing to bear the costs of
3849 those retrofits. And I think that that is fair, that if you
3850 are going to ask a community to retrofit something that they
3851 already bought, that the people that benefit, you know, ought
3852 to help pay for that. And so, if you could, please keep
3853 those things in mind.

3854 And then, in the time I have left, I want to talk a
3855 little bit about the spectrum and this seemingly insatiable
3856 demand for spectrum that is being driven by not just digital
3857 media consumption on portable devices, but newly now by AI,
3858 and particularly generative AI that is, if you look at it, it

3859 is going to be at least a linear increase in the number of
3860 the amount of spectrum that we use. In the most dire cases
3861 it is exponential. So we are going to run out of spectrum if
3862 we -- on the path that we are on.

3863 Can you talk us through how the FCC views this? I mean,
3864 are we going to run out of spectrum? I know we have directed
3865 you to make more spectrum available. Is that going to be
3866 sufficient? What do you see the future hold?

3867 *Mr. Carr. Yes, right now the United States is a bit
3868 out of balance in terms of spectrum policy. We have taken a
3869 lot of good action on license, we have taken a lot of good
3870 action to have access on the Federal side, to Federal
3871 spectrum. But this, you know, high-power commercial spectrum
3872 for NextGen is where we really need to focus our efforts, and
3873 that is why I think C-band and others are so important.

3874 To your point, we are seeing this hockey stick curve of
3875 demand, historically. But now, with AI coming online, we
3876 want AI to work directly on your smartphone. Well, that
3877 hockey stick just goes straight through the roof. And so we
3878 have to continue to bring more spectrum online, but also
3879 permitting reform. Because if you can split cells by making
3880 it not onerous to build a new cell site, that can help take
3881 care of capacity, as well. But we are facing, potentially, a
3882 shortfall of capacity a number of years from now, which is
3883 why this work we are doing right now is so important.

3884 *Mr. Obernolte. All right --

3885 *Mr. Hudson. The gentleman's time has expired.

3886 *Mr. Obernolte. I yield back.

3887 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you. And the chair will remind the
3888 committee that we are pushing up on votes at 1:30. It is my
3889 intention to drive through, and we have got three members of
3890 our full committee who have waived on. I would like to push
3891 through these. I would just ask everyone, please observe the
3892 time limits so we can get everyone's questions in.

3893 The chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr.
3894 Tonko, for five minutes to ask your questions.

3895 *Mr. Tonko. Thank you, Chair Hudson and Ranking Member
3896 Matsui, for co-hosting this hearing, and welcome to our
3897 guests.

3898 In my opinion, this hearing is long overdue. The
3899 actions of the Federal Communications Commission over the
3900 past year have been deeply troubling and demand serious
3901 oversight. As many of my colleagues have discussed, we have
3902 seen dangerous violations of free speech, of political
3903 interference certainly at what should be an independent
3904 agency, and brazen efforts to greenlight illegal broadcast
3905 consolidation.

3906 Today I want to focus on the Commission's rollback of
3907 basic consumer protections. I listed with great -- listened
3908 with great interest to Ms. Castor's exchange with the panel

3909 as it relates to E-Rate support. In 2024, when the FCC
3910 announced it was expanding E-Rate support to include WiFi on
3911 school busses and hotspot lending by schools and libraries, I
3912 was indeed thrilled. I have long advocated for this
3913 expansion as a practical way to narrow that homework gap and
3914 reach students who otherwise lack reliable broadband access.

3915 However, last year the Commission reversed its course,
3916 and I joined many of my colleagues in calling out that
3917 rollback, and I do it again here today. So Chairman Carr and
3918 Commissioner Trusty, I strongly urge you to reconsider your
3919 votes and reinstate that rule. This decision was cruel and,
3920 I believe, very much short-sighted. It strips students of
3921 the tools they need to succeed and widens that digital divide
3922 the Commission is charged with closing.

3923 Commissioner Gomez, in your testimony you noted that E-
3924 Rate support for busses and hotspots was one of the most
3925 effective tools the FCC had to ensure students across the
3926 country are not left behind in our digital economy, and I
3927 heard some of your -- I heard all of your remarks to
3928 Representative Castor. But from your perspective, what
3929 impact will students, educators, and libraries experience as
3930 a rollback with these E-Rate expansions?

3931 And what does that mean for the FCC's obligation to
3932 ensure universal service?

3933 *Ms. Gomez. Yes, thank you for that question.

3934 Broadband connectivity is crucial to be able to
3935 participate in today's digital economy in order for students
3936 to become ready for the digital future, in order for seniors
3937 to be able to make their health appointments, in order for
3938 people to apply for jobs, in order for veterans to be able to
3939 meet their health care, as well. And yet, if you don't have
3940 access to broadband, we need the ability to provide
3941 affordable access to these students and to all these other
3942 folks that rely on broadband because today broadband is
3943 everywhere. We have -- everything is done online.

3944 So losing access via hotspots means students can't do it
3945 to do homework. Losing the WiFi means students can't do it
3946 while they are on their school busses. There are some states
3947 where students are on the school bus for two hours each way.
3948 Think about what they could do to do their homework on those
3949 busses, and we pulled that away.

3950 *Mr. Tonko. Thank you for the response. Last month
3951 this committee held a hearing on public safety, with
3952 witnesses emphasizing that emergency alerts must be effective
3953 for everyone, including individuals with language barriers.
3954 So it also is disappointing to have seen the FCC delay
3955 common-sense safety reforms like multilingual emergency
3956 alerts. The Commission had to be sued by state attorneys
3957 general, including New York's Letitia James, for obstruction
3958 before publishing its rule on multilingual emergency alerts.

3959 And even now, provisions of that rule have been delayed
3960 indefinitely.

3961 So Commissioner Gomez, can you explain the risks that
3962 delayed multilingual alerts pose to our public safety?

3963 *Ms. Gomez. Yes. It is so important that everyone be
3964 able to get access to emergency alerts, and that they be able
3965 to understand them. If -- we can only save lives if people
3966 understand the emergency alerts.

3967 So we have squandered time. We have the Olympics and
3968 the World Cup coming next year, which is going to require a
3969 lot of people to get alerts, if there is a public safety
3970 incident, in a language they might understand. So I am
3971 hopeful that we will move forward in order to ensure that
3972 everyone can understand the emergency alerts.

3973 *Mr. Tonko. Well, we see a lot of brutality in our
3974 streets and neighborhoods these days. So --

3975 *Mr. Carr. Just a point of clarification, because I
3976 think this is important. Multilingual alerts could go out
3977 before, and they can go out today, and then go out tomorrow.
3978 So I just want to make sure we are not leaving people with
3979 the misimpression that alert originators can't send out
3980 multilingual alerts. They can, and we want them to.

3981 *Mr. Tonko. Okay.

3982 *Ms. Gomez. And it is true that that is the case. What
3983 this does, what the FCC has paused is actually making it

3984 easier and more frequent that they will be able to put those
3985 out, because right now the vast majority of alerts go out in
3986 English because it is the originators that put them out.

3987 *Mr. Tonko. Well, thank you. I had other questions, so
3988 I will get them to the committee.

3989 [The information follows:]

3990

3991 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

3992

3993 *Mr. Tonko. But let me just close and say that freedom
3994 of speech is the underpinning of our republic.

3995 *Mr. Hudson. Thank --

3996 *Mr. Tonko. With that I yield back.

3997 *Mr. Hudson. I thank the gentleman. The chair now
3998 recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Joyce, for
3999 five minutes to ask your questions.

4000 *Mr. Joyce. Thank you, Chairman Hudson, for allowing me
4001 to join this very important hearing.

4002 The intersection of rural broadband and health care is
4003 critical to examine as we work together in expanding
4004 connectivity to all Americans.

4005 Chairman Carr, thank you for coming to Pennsylvania's
4006 13th congressional district. Thank you for meeting with the
4007 providers. Thank you for working with the poll workers and
4008 climbing those towers. Your personal impact and commitment
4009 is felt in Pennsylvania's 13th congressional district.

4010 Rural districts like the one you visited and I represent
4011 are often left behind as broadband deployment accelerates
4012 across the country. Your personal commitment to not allow
4013 the rural areas to be left behind is important, and that
4014 resonates throughout America.

4015 As a doctor, I have seen the impact that the digital
4016 divide has on rural health care providers. Rural health care
4017 providers serve unique populations that are often

4018 underserved. We doctors who serve in rural areas often
4019 struggle to access telecommunications infrastructure and
4020 broadband that is essential to serve our patients.

4021 The RHC program offered by the FCC under the Universal
4022 Service Fund aims to provide funding to eligible care
4023 providers for telecommunications and broadband services
4024 necessary for the provision of health care today. The RHC
4025 program serves my constituents in Pennsylvania's 13th
4026 congressional district. Connecting them and the funding and
4027 connectivity resources are important. It is crucial that we
4028 evaluate the efficiency and the effectiveness of the RHC
4029 program, and how it contributes to the FCC's goal of
4030 connecting all of America. At WellSpan Health, the RHC
4031 program has allowed hospitals to maintain access to physical,
4032 behavioral, and maternal care in Pennsylvania's 13th
4033 congressional district.

4034 Chairman Carr, as I have noted, you have visited the
4035 13th congressional district in Pennsylvania on more than one
4036 occasion, and you personally are keenly aware of the
4037 broadband challenges that the district faces, particularly in
4038 the health care industry. How do you measure the
4039 effectiveness in the RHC program and the impact of the
4040 program that we are seeing in rural communities, in hospitals
4041 like WellSpan?

4042 *Mr. Carr. Congressman, thank you for the question, and

4043 thanks for your leadership for Pennsylvania and for your
4044 district.

4045 If you look back just the last five years alone, my
4046 understanding is that almost \$2.5 million have flowed to your
4047 district for rural health care, and we are seeing those funds
4048 being put to use to make sure people can have access to next
4049 generation care. And we are working together to make sure
4050 that we expand rural broadband, as well, to further bolster
4051 access to health care and NextGen services for the good
4052 people in your community.

4053 *Mr. Joyce. As we are talking today, there are patients
4054 who are connecting with their doctors right now receiving the
4055 care that, to your point, Chair Carr, was not available two-
4056 and-a-half years ago. Telehealth is a tool that has become
4057 increasingly valuable, as I have noted, in rural areas, in
4058 underserved areas. In some areas, telehealth is the most
4059 accessible option for patients seeking care.

4060 Commissioner Trusty, you said in your written testimony
4061 that you have witnessed how broadband is delivering quality
4062 care straight into rural patients' homes through video. How
4063 can the RHC program serve providers that are seeking to
4064 expand their health care options for rural patients?

4065 *Ms. Trusty. Thank you for the question, and also thank
4066 you for your leadership.

4067 So, as you know, the rural health care program ensures

4068 that rural patients have access to modern health care or
4069 telehealth. In recent months we have made process
4070 improvements at the FCC to extend funding deadlines to ensure
4071 we have the funding to meet the demand and to roll over
4072 additional funding for the funding year 2025 to meet the
4073 needs of rural communities across the country.

4074 I think this congressional bipartisan working group on
4075 USF is another forum for us to explore additional reforms or
4076 modernizations to this program so that all rural Americans
4077 can have access to quality health care services.

4078 *Mr. Joyce. I look forward to working with you and
4079 seeing that expansion continue.

4080 Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to waive on to
4081 this important hearing, and I yield back the remainder of my
4082 time.

4083 *Mr. Hudson. The chair appreciates that, and I will now
4084 recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Mullin, for five
4085 minutes to ask your questions.

4086 *Mr. Mullin. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4087 Chairman Carr, as we have heard today from my
4088 colleagues, there are serious concerns about the FCC's
4089 actions during your tenure and that they crossed the line
4090 into interference with free speech, a concern that I share.
4091 Will you simply commit today that the FCC will not use its
4092 licensing authority, enforcement role, or claims of news

4093 distortion to politically pressure or punish broadcasters for
4094 their editorial decisions?

4095 *Mr. Carr. The FCC is going to enforce the public
4096 interest standard, news distortion, broadcast hoax rule, and,
4097 you know, that is the actions we are going to take.

4098 *Mr. Mullin. I want to emphasize the importance of
4099 editorial independence to our democracy. Broadcasters,
4100 whether public, private, local, or national, need to be able
4101 to exercise lawful journalistic judgment without fear of
4102 retaliation from the Federal Government. That principle is
4103 foundational to the First Amendment and to a functioning
4104 democracy.

4105 So Commissioner Gomez, in your testimony today you
4106 warned that the Commission has asserted what you described as
4107 a "roving mandate" to police speech it does not like,
4108 relying on an undefined and unchecked interpretation of the
4109 public interest standard. Can you explain in plain terms the
4110 role Congress has given to the FCC?

4111 And should the FCC be in the business of content
4112 regulation, especially in light of how people are now
4113 receiving their content?

4114 *Ms. Gomez. Yes, thank you for that question.

4115 The FCC does regulate the broadcast licensing to serve
4116 the public interest, but the public interest is not some
4117 nebulous standard that can be used in order to target any

4118 content that this administration doesn't like, and that is
4119 the problem with this continued use of this public interest
4120 standard, as it exists to punish broadcasters because of
4121 their editorial decisions or because of their news reporting.

4122 We need to go back to simply conducting our role of
4123 ensuring that the broadcasters have the infrastructure that
4124 they need, and in order to be able to serve their local
4125 communities, and that is what I think we should be doing. We
4126 should not be pressuring broadcasters on their content. It
4127 violates the First Amendment and the Communications Act
4128 prohibition on censorship.

4129 *Mr. Mullin. Thank you for that. And out of respect
4130 for time, just one final issue. In light of a \$1 billion
4131 rescission cut to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and
4132 its impact on our emergency alert systems, given that extreme
4133 weather events are increasing in both frequency and severity,
4134 is the FCC prepared to provide -- and I will ask you again,
4135 Commissioner Gomez -- additional technical support to local
4136 broadcasters to both maintain and build out resilient
4137 emergency alerting systems, particularly for rural and
4138 underserved communities that rely on public and local
4139 broadcasters for lifesaving information?

4140 *Ms. Gomez. Thank you for bringing to light this issue
4141 with the defunding of public broadcasters. Not only are we
4142 losing educational programing, local news, a lot of civic

4143 engagement, but we are also losing the backbone of our
4144 emergency alert system. And I am unaware that the FCC has
4145 any activities to address this issue, but it is something
4146 that we really need to consider.

4147 I would urge Congress to refund public media because of
4148 the important services that they provide, both from a public
4149 safety perspective and also to their local communities.

4150 *Mr. Mullin. I certainly share that view.

4151 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4152 Thank you all for your testimony.

4153 I yield back.

4154 *Mr. Hudson. Thank you.

4155 I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record the
4156 documents included on the staff hearing documents list.

4157 Without objection, so ordered.

4158 [The information follows:]

4159

4160 *****COMMITTEE INSERT*****

4161

4162 *Mr. Hudson. Seeing there are no further members
4163 wishing to be recognized, I would like to thank our witnesses
4164 for being here today.

4165 I remind members they have 10 business days to submit
4166 questions for the record, and I ask the witnesses to respond
4167 to those questions promptly. Members should submit their
4168 questions by the close of business on January 28, 2026, which
4169 tells me I have 10 days until my mother's birthday, because
4170 it is the 28th.

4171 [Laughter.]

4172 *Mr. Hudson. Without objection, the subcommittee is
4173 adjourned.

4174 [Whereupon, at 1:38 p.m., the subcommittee was
4175 adjourned.]