

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL
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BEFORE THE
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ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE
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Good morning, Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Eshoo, and members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you along with my colleagues at the Federal Communications Commission.

Today, communications technologies account for one-sixth of the economy. No wonder. These are the networks that carry all aspects of modern commercial and civic life. They are changing at a breathtaking pace, requiring us to think boldly about the future. In the months ahead the agency will do just that as we begin the world’s first spectrum incentive auctions, work to speed the IP transition, and update universal service and media policies.

This is lofty stuff. But I want to begin today by talking about the least glamorous part of the communications revolution. I want to talk about infrastructure. Because no amount of new fiber optic facilities or spectrum matters without good policies on the ground.

We need to take a comprehensive look at deployment practices and find a way to make them more consistent across the country. We can begin with Dig Once policies—which can pave the way for more broadband deployment. The notion behind Dig Once is simple. When construction crews are building or repairing roads, deploying broadband conduit at the same time

adds only 1% to the cost of highway projects. But this small change can have big impact—yielding more broadband investment, more universal access, and more competition.

We should also focus on federal lands—which make up as much as one-third of our national real estate. We can expedite deployment here by creating an open data inventory of federal infrastructure assets that can help support broadband and wireless deployment. We also need standard contracts from the General Services Administration to facilitate deployment of antenna structures on federal property. While we're at it, let's consider extending FCC shot clock policies for state and local jurisdictions to federal authorities so those who want to deploy infrastructure get a timely response.

Not all of these policies can be enacted by the agency alone, but I believe it is essential that we work with you and our federal colleagues to help put them in place.

Now these gritty realities of network deployment may not get the glory, but they are important. Of course, it is also important that we focus on what we can do with our new networks.

Let me begin with how networks are used for learning.

When I was growing up, homework required just a paper, pencil, and my brother leaving me alone. No more. Because today, roughly seven in ten teachers assign homework that

requires access to broadband. But FCC data suggest that as many as one in three households do not subscribe to broadband service.

Think about those numbers. Where they overlap is what I call the Homework Gap. If you are a student in a household without broadband, just getting homework done is hard. Applying for a scholarship is challenging. While some students may have access to a smartphone, let me submit to you that a phone is just not how you want to research and type a paper, apply for jobs, or further your education.

These students enter the job market with a serious handicap. That's a market today where half of all jobs require digital skills. By the end of the decade that number jumps to 77 percent. But the loss here is more than individual. It's a loss to our collective human capital and shared economic future that we need to address.

This will require a mix of public and private sector efforts, modernizing FCC work to support connectivity in low-income households, more Wi-Fi, more competition—and better infrastructure. But I think the sooner we act, the sooner we bridge the Homework Gap and give more students a fair shot at 21st century success.

Learning, of course, is just one example of how new communications technologies are remaking our world. There are others. Just last week we had a cruel reminder that when the unthinkable occurs our security so often depends on connectivity. In the days and weeks ahead I know our horror will not fade and our resilience will only grow. At home and abroad we will

need to study the mix of public alerts, first responder communications, and social networking that facilitated safety. Those lessons can make us stronger and we should submit ourselves to the discipline of learning them.

Thank you. I look forward to answering your questions.