

**STATEMENT OF  
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Good afternoon, Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Blackburn, Ranking Member Doyle and other Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear here today. It is my first appearance before you since rejoining the FCC. Of course, a little distance provides perspective. And in my time away one thing became abundantly clear: The future belongs to the connected. No matter who you are or where you live in this country you need access to modern communications for a fair shot at 21<sup>st</sup> century success.

But the fact of the matter is that today too many Americans lack access to broadband. Let's put a number on it. Right now, 34 million Americans lack access to high-speed service. This number includes 23 million Americans living in rural areas. This is just not acceptable. We need to do better.

But statistics alone don't tell the whole story. To get a picture of just what it means to be consigned to the wrong side of the digital divide consider kids and homework. Today, seven in ten teachers assign homework that requires broadband access. But data from the FCC show that as many as one in three households do not subscribe to Internet service. Where those numbers overlap is what I call the Homework Gap. According to the Senate Joint Economic Committee, the Homework Gap is real. By their estimate, it affects 12 million children across the country.

I have heard from students in Texas who do homework at fast food restaurants with fries—just to get a free Wi-Fi signal. I have heard from students in Pennsylvania who make elaborate plans every day to head to the homes of friends and relatives just to be able to get online. I have heard from high school football players in rural New Mexico who linger in the school parking lot after games with devices in the pitch-black dark because it is the only place they can get a reliable connection. These kids have grit. But it shouldn't be this hard. Because today no child can be left offline—developing digital skills is flat-out essential for education and participation in the modern economy.

I hope that adds a human dimension to what it means to not have access to broadband. So now let me tell you what we can do about it.

If we want to get serious about addressing our broadband problems, we need to know exactly where those problems are most pronounced. We need better mapping. Nearly nine years ago, in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Congress had a good idea. It created a

National Broadband Map, identifying where deployment has and has not occurred. But if you check that map online now you will see that it was last updated over three years ago. In the Internet age, three years is an eternity.

You cannot manage what you do not measure. So I think it's time for a National Broadband Map that offers an honest picture of wired and wireless broadband across the country. Too often the FCC cobbles together data for each individual rulemaking and report without a comprehensive and updated snapshot of where service is and is not.

We can build this map with data sets in Washington, but it would be great if we had a clearer picture on the ground. I'm a big believer in the wisdom of crowds, so I think we should put it to the public. If any of your constituents have not been able to get service, or live in an area that lacks it, help us make a map and write us at [broadbandfail@fcc.gov](mailto:broadbandfail@fcc.gov). I set up this account up to take in the public's stories and ideas. I will share everything that comes in with the Chairman and my other colleagues, too. Because it is time to turn every one of these broadband fails into something better—broadband success.

Mapping is important because it can improve FCC work under the Communications Act. Section 254 directs the FCC to ensure “consumers in all regions of the Nation” have access to communications, with rural rates reasonable comparably to urban rates. To do so we have more ongoing universal service proceedings than I have time to talk about today. But one thing is clear: with better data we will do a better job.

Finally, I want to point out that with broadband speed matters. The FCC has a statutory duty to annually assess the state of broadband deployment. Today, our national standard is 25 Megabits. But the agency has sought comment on scaling this back to 10 Megabits. That's crazy. We won't solve our broadband problems by lowering our standards. We need to correct this course immediately and start setting bigger goals if we want to do bigger things.

Let me close by thanking you for having me at this hearing. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.