

**Opening Statement of Chairman Marsha Blackburn
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission.”
July 25, 2018**

(As prepared for delivery)

Good morning and welcome to today’s hearing on oversight of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Today’s hearing marks the first time in 28 years that the FCC has appeared before this Subcommittee having been reauthorized by Congress. So, I am delighted to welcome the recently reauthorized Commission here today.

This reauthorization effort reflects bipartisan, bicameral support of the FCC and the important work it carries out each day to enhance public safety technologies and alerts, strengthen our national security, increase broadband deployment, and protect consumers while fostering competition and innovation in the communications marketplace. I hope today also demonstrates the importance of being reauthorized, as each of the Commissioners articulates how that action benefits an organization. I know we can deliver the same bipartisan accomplishment for your colleagues at the NTIA.

While the FCC is charged with many important tasks, one of the most critical roles it plays revolves around public safety. From working to ensure that alerting technologies warn the public of impending emergencies, to aiding in the restoration of communications networks

and services following emergencies, the FCC is responsible for making sure our communications systems are there when Americans are most in need of life-saving information. This work is furthered through the nation's 9-1-1 service platform. With this year being the 50th anniversary of the first call to 9-1-1, we here in Congress have been actively working with both the FCC and the NTIA to improve the country's 9-1-1 systems, and facilitate the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 services. I am looking forward to hearing more today about the FCC's work to advance public safety before, during, and after emergencies.

The FCC has also worked closely with this Subcommittee in our shared goal of promoting broadband access and closing the digital divide. We all agree on the importance of bringing the benefits of broadband to all Americans, and this is especially true in rural America. RAY BAUM's Act included a number of bipartisan provisions from members of this subcommittee and members from the full Energy and Commerce committee that will help the FCC in removing federal barriers to broadband deployment, increasing the amount of available spectrum, and funding broadband. And, just last week in a hearing on Rural Broadband, we heard from a variety of stakeholders on the impact of that legislation. I look forward to hearing more today on how the FCC has begun to implement this legislation. I also look forward to hearing the Commission's recommendations on how we can improve

connectivity for communities that are in desperate need of improvements to their education and health care services.

It is this Subcommittee's primary role to conduct oversight of all the programs and policies overseen by the FCC and I remain focused on our key priorities so we can focus the work of the Commission.

At this time, I will yield to the remainder of my time to Mr. Lance for an opening statement.