

**STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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Good afternoon, Chairman Walden, Ranking Member Pallone, Chairman Blackburn, Ranking Member Doyle, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I believe the future belongs to the connected. No matter who you are or where you live in this country you need access to modern communications to have a fair shot at 21st century success. Clearing the way for this connected future should be at the heart of everything we do at the Federal Communications Commission.

It has been nine months—to the day—since we last appeared before you for an oversight hearing. Nine months is a long time. It's the equivalent of a school year. So let me offer the equivalent of a quick year-end report.

Too many Americans still lack access to broadband. Let's put a number on it. Right now, 24 million Americans have no high-speed service. This is not acceptable. We need to do better.

Too often during the last nine months the agency acted at the behest of the corporate forces that surround it, shortchanging the American people. You can see that clearly with our roll back of net neutrality. You see it, too, with our efforts to foster the deployment of new networks but failure to fully engage those who need a voice in our policies—the cities and towns that should be our partners in the process, the Tribal communities that are entitled to government-to-government consultation, and the Department of Commerce which just last week expressed concern about how our rush to reform could harm national security and public safety services. Likewise, you see it in proposed reforms that undermine our Lifeline program—and the populations that rely on it, including those served by domestic violence shelters, military veterans, homeless youth, and residents of Puerto Rico who are still recovering from a harrowing storm and grave humanitarian crisis.

Too often our procedures fall short of what good governance requires. Our mapping practices for broadband do not accurately reflect the state of connectivity on the ground. Our claim that the agency suffered a Distributed Denial of Service Attack following John Oliver's report on our net neutrality plans is just not credible. In the

meantime, the agency has ignored the fact that this public docket is flooded with fraud—including half a million comments from Russia and two million individuals with stolen identities.

I believe these things need to be fixed. So many people think that Washington is rigged against them. It saddens me when on too many occasions during the last nine months this agency proved them right. But good report cards do not only look to the past, they offer an eye to the future—and a take on what is possible.

I believe that at this table there is a desire to extend the reach of broadband service, lead the world in 5G wireless deployment, and bring the opportunities of the digital age to more people in more places.

I see the same desire everywhere I go. In the last few weeks I have been in rural New Mexico and urban New York. In both places, I visited schools with students who lack broadband at home and as result struggle with nightly schoolwork. There are 12 million children across the country with this problem. They fall into a Homework Gap that is the cruelest part of our digital divide. But I also saw that these communities are trying to address this gap so that every student has a decent chance at digital age success. They are experimenting with connected school buses. They are looking at loaning out hotspots in libraries. They are exploring public wi-fi in their communities. And they are pulling together information they can about low-cost service that can help low-income households get online. They deserve our support and a plan to address the Homework Gap—so that no child is left offline. I believe it is still within our capability to produce one.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the agency's recent decision regarding Sinclair Broadcasting. When I last appeared before you nine months ago, I alone expressed concern about how the agency had bent and twisted so many of its media policies to serve the business plans of this one company. This changed last week when the agency adopted an order designating the proposed Sinclair-Tribune transaction for hearing. I want thank my colleagues—and the Chairman in particular—for the effort to reach consensus on this matter.

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