

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

July 10, 2018

The Honorable Ajit V. Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We are deeply concerned that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is poised to adopt a rule that would eliminate the agency's traditional and important role of helping consumers in the informal complaint process.<sup>1</sup> Too often, consumers wronged by communications companies face unending corporate bureaucracy instead of quick, meaningful resolutions. Historically, FCC staff has reviewed responses to informal complaints and, where merited, urged companies to address any service problems. Creating a rule that directs FCC staff to simply pass consumers' informal complaints on to the company and then to advise consumers that they file a \$225 formal complaint if not satisfied ignores the core mission of the FCC – working in the public interest.<sup>2</sup>

At a time when consumers are highly dissatisfied with their communications companies, this abrupt change in policy troubles us.<sup>3</sup> As the chief communications regulator, the FCC plays a critical role in ensuring consumers—including families, small businesses, and struggling Americans—get fair and honest treatment from their service providers. We have all heard countless stories of consumers complaining to the FCC about waiting months to have an erroneous charge removed from their bill or for a refund for a service they never ordered or

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Communications Commission, *Amendment of Procedural Rules Governing Formal Complaint Proceedings Delegated to the Enforcement Bureau*, Report and Order, EB Docket 17-245, FCC 18-XXX.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.* at note 14.

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., *Consumer Satisfaction with Cable, Internet Service Providers Drops Again*, The Motley Fool (May 24, 2018); *Customer Dissatisfaction with Mobile Carriers Runs High: Capgemini*, eWeek (May 11, 2016).

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about accessibility services that are not working. Oftentimes these issues are corrected for consumers as a result of the FCC's advocacy on their behalf.

We worry that the proposed change signals that the FCC no longer intends to play this role, and will instead simply tell consumers with limited means and time that they need to start an expensive and complicated formal legal process. Such an outcome is neither compelled by statute nor a wise public policy decision. Therefore, we urge you to reconsider this rule revision before the vote on July 12, consistent with applicable law and regulation.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact Gerald Leverich of the Democratic Committee staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Frank Pallone, Jr. in blue ink.

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member

Handwritten signature of Mike Doyle in blue ink.

Mike Doyle  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Communications  
and Technology