

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

**BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE  
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**CHECKS AND BALANCES: OVERSIGHT  
OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

**JUNE 21, 2023**

Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Matsui, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers, and Ranking Member Pallone, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

The last time that I appeared before this body, I remarked that we stood at an inflection point in our communications history. I continue to believe that is the case. Broadband has emerged as a linchpin of opportunity in our modern economy, creating a new sense of urgency to connect all Americans, everywhere. At the same time, wireless networks continue to evolve to new and vastly more capable technology generations, driving a need for ubiquity and greater access to the scarce commodity we call spectrum. Amidst our greater interconnectedness, we also continue to face new threats from bad actors and foreign adversaries. Now more than ever before, our network security is national security.

In the age of online job boards, telehealth, and the homework gap, millions of Americans remain without a home broadband connection. For far too many of them, affordability is a key reason why. In response to the problem, Congress established the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which we implemented. As of June 12, 18.68 million households were enrolled in ACP. That figure includes more than 100,000 households in 36 states, 10,000 households in all

50 states, and at least 100 households in several thousand rural zip codes, including more than 80 percent of non-metro counties.

Our wireless networks continue to transform the way we live, work, learn, build, and communicate. At the end of last year, U.S. mobile carriers had launched 5G networks in more than 500 American cities—surpassing China’s count for the first time. To ensure that this pace of wireless innovation continues—and that it benefits all Americans—our networks need to grow in capability, coverage, and the choice they offer consumers.

As we expand access and increase our connected capabilities, we have even more reason to ensure that our networks are secure. In 2019, I called for the United States to “Find It, Fix It, Fund It”—to identify insecure equipment in U.S. telecommunications networks, remove that equipment, and replace it with equipment from trusted sources. Through your action in the Secure and Trusted Communications Act of 2019, we are now in the process of implementing rip-and-replace. We must continue to work together to address this ongoing threat and finalize our remediation process.

Thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.