

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ANNA M. GOMEZ
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**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & COMMERCE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 30, 2023**

Good morning, Chairman Latta, Ranking Member Matsui, Chairwoman McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member Pallone, and members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today. I also would like to thank Chairwoman Rosenworcel, Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Starks, Commissioner Simington, and the FCC staff for the warm and generous welcome I received when I was sworn into office just two months ago. It has been a pleasure getting to know the Commissioners and the bureau staff and learning about the important work they do for the agency.

I have been working in telecommunications for close to 30 years, more than half of that time serving in government in various capacities at the FCC, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, briefly, the Senate Commerce Committee, the Department of State, and the White House.

Public service is a special calling. A desire to give back and serve my community was instilled in me at a young age.

My father is an immigrant. My mother, who passed away over twenty years ago, was a dentist. My brother is a computer programmer. Growing up, we moved frequently for my dad's job. But after he was laid off and tried to start something on his own, we lost everything. We

struggled, like so many families, to stretch the dollar and cut where we could. We did not have money to afford my college tuition, so I worked, borrowed, and paid my way through college and law school. After working briefly at a law firm, when the opportunity arose to serve as an attorney advisor at the FCC, I jumped at the chance. Little did I know that the three decades of experience that followed would lead me here, testifying before Congress as an FCC Commissioner.

I understand the importance of policy that both protects the public interest and promotes competition and innovation. I worked on transformational rulemakings at the Commission, stood up FirstNet, represented the interests of some of our country's largest and most innovative corporations before government regulators, and represented the United States in international spectrum negotiations. As Commissioner, I am committed to ensuring we have a vibrant, strong, competitive communications marketplace that promotes U.S. economic prosperity and security, while also meeting the needs of all consumers.

The Federal Communications Commission sits at the forefront of technology and innovation. The FCC has never been more relevant and instrumental in our daily lives. Digital life touches every aspect of our work, our education, our health care, and so much more. It also can create unbounded opportunity for those who have access to it while at the same time, be a locked door to the futures of those who do not.

I believe the FCC does best when its work honors the needs of the people it serves. That means connecting everyone everywhere to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband. My experience engaging with the public over the past two months as a Commissioner has demonstrated to me the ever-increasing importance of the Commission's work. All stakeholders,

from individuals, to industry, to civil rights and public interest groups – each one has underscored the centrality of broadband to our lives. The path to success for the next generation without access to reliable broadband is a treacherous road as compared to those with access.

I saw this clearly when I recently visited several grade school classes and met with an Affordable Connectivity Program outreach grantee. They stressed the importance of the FCC’s pandemic connectivity programs to helping students and families get connected and continue to learn and to work during the pandemic, and the role the Affordable Connectivity Program has played in supporting and expanding access for those who cannot afford it. The Commission, charged with administering these programs, has helped ensure that people across the country have access to affordable, reliable broadband internet access. We must continue to work towards this mission. Ensuring that everyone in rural, tribal, suburban, and urban communities can get and *stay* connected is critical to success for us all.

This also means ensuring our first responders can communicate in times of crisis. My years of working with public safety have given me an appreciation of their unique—and vital—communications needs.

It also means ensuring our connections are secure and resilient. As we build out new networks and deploy a once-in-a-generation level of broadband support to states, it is critical that we shore up our networks so that governments, public safety officials, institutions, and consumers can trust that the information we send and receive is protected.

We must be vigilant about protecting consumers. From spam calls and scam texts, to protecting victims of domestic violence, to ensuring the internet remains open, consumers’ interests must lead our policymaking.

We must continue to foster innovation by ensuring our spectrum policies meet the needs of today *and* tomorrow, beginning with the reauthorization of spectrum auction authority. This will ensure our technological leadership continues on a global stage. Managing the nation's airwaves is always complex given how intertwined they are with innovation and economic growth in the global economy. Spectrum enables many services on which Americans rely every day, like mobile broadband, remote learning, communicating on airplanes and ships, and GPS. Over the last two weeks, I attended AfricaCom and the World Radiocommunication Conference where I engaged with stakeholders in the international community in support of the United States effort to cement our leadership in the next generation of space-based and mobile broadband services as well as innovation in unlicensed technologies.

My first two months on the job have been very productive, but I know that there are more people to meet, places to visit, organizations to engage, and issues to address. And I welcome the opportunity to work with each of the Members of this Subcommittee on the issues that are important to your constituents. Thank you again for the invitation to testify today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.