

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

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

NOVEMBER 30, 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.

As a Commissioner, I am committed to ensuring that every American, no matter who they are or where they live, shares in the benefits of connectivity. I am proud of the FCC's leadership in working to make broadband universally accessible and affordable, aligning with Congressional goals. The Affordable Connectivity Program's (ACP) success is evident, with substantial enrollment nationwide. Over 22 million households in rural, urban, and tribal communities have access to connectivity that supports employment, education, telehealth, and more. This includes more than 100,000 households enrolled in 40 states, 15,000 households in all 50 states, at least 5,905 zip codes with more than 1,000 households enrolled, and thousands of rural zip codes with ACP participants. One place where I have prioritized my efforts is in helping to increase awareness and enrollment among those who live in public housing, including "Queen Bea" from the Yesler Terrace in Seattle, Washington who told me that "it was a blessing to have the internet." I agree. The ACP's funding is running out, and it is vital that we work

together to keep these households connected so the benefits of broadband can continue to flow to all.

In recent months, we've taken historic steps towards ensuring the fundamental fairness of the internet. We commenced a proceeding to revive longstanding principles against blocking and throttling of legal content, and paid prioritization that can compromise innovation. These efforts can protect consumers in their access to broadband, an essential service, while also enhancing our security and aligning broadband policy with national consensus. We also implemented the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's directive that we set forth rules to prevent and eliminate digital discrimination. Stopping digital discrimination anywhere will empower individuals everywhere.

At the ongoing ITU World Radiocommunication Conference in Dubai, our discussions are shaping the future of global spectrum management. I am confident that American workers and innovators will build a bright future for wireless and satellite networks, and note that our ability to lead—abroad and here at home—is premised on an extension of the FCC's spectrum auction authority.

Finally, securing our networks against threats remains a top priority. While we work closely with our sister agencies and ISPs, reliance on self-regulation is insufficient. Our networks are simply too vital. One priority is to complete the rip and replace process. We have made great progress implementing the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019, but additional funding is needed to complete the removal, replacement, and destruction of insecure equipment and services from our communications networks. Another is to complete the Cyber Trust Mark rulemaking, which would raise the bar for cybersecurity across smart devices.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss these vital issues. I look forward to your questions.