

OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2026

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:16 a.m., in the John D. Dingell Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Richard Hudson (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Members present: Representatives Hudson, Allen, Latta, Griffith, Bilirakis, Carter of Georgia, Fulcher, Pfluger, Cammack, Obernolte, Houchin, Fry, Kean, Goldman, Fedorchak, Guthrie (ex officio), Matsui (subcommittee ranking member), Soto, Clarke, Ruiz, Peters, Dingell, Kelly, Barragán, Carter of Louisiana, Menendez, Landsman, McClellan, Castor, and Pallone (ex officio).

Also present: Representatives Joyce, Tonko, and Mullin.

Staff present: Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Michael Essington, Chief Counsel, Communications and Technology; Sydney Greene, Director of Finance and Logistics; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Noah Jackson, Clerk, Communications and Technology; AT Johnson, Special Advisor; Sophie Khanahmadi, Deputy Staff Director; Brayden Lacefield, Special Assistant; John Lin, Senior Counsel, Communications and Technology; Sarah Meier, Counsel and Parliamentarian; Joel Miller, Chief Counsel; Elaina Murphy, Professional Staff Member, Communications and Technology; Dylan Rogers, Professional Staff Member, Communications and Technology; Chris Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Hannah Anton, Minority Policy Analyst; Parul Desai, Minority Chief Counsel, Communications and Technology; Ava Digre, Minority Intern; Waverly Gordon, Minority Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff Director; Jackson Hall, Minority Intern; Will McAuliffe, Minority Chief Counsel, Oversight and Investigations; Dan Miller, Minority Professional Staff Member; Emma Roehrig, Minority Staff Assistant; Johanna Thomas, Minority Counsel; Hannah Treger, Minority Staff Assistant; and Caroline Wood, Minority Research Analyst.

Mr. HUDSON. The subcommittee will come to order, and the Chair recognizes himself for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD HUDSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Good morning, and welcome to today's oversight hearing, the first of this Congress, of the Federal Communications Commission.

Welcome back, Chairman Brendan Carr. Congratulations on your appointment as Chairman.

And welcome to Commissioner Anna Gomez. I look forward to your testimony today.

And I want to extend a special welcome—or should I say welcome back, or maybe welcome home—to Commissioner Olivia Trusty. Congratulations on your confirmation, and welcome to your first oversight hearing in your old stomping grounds here at the Energy and Commerce. It is always great for us to see a former staffer on the committee rise to such heights to be a Commissioner on the FCC. We are really proud of you, and appreciate you being here with us today. I know Mr. Latta is very proud of you, as well.

The FCC had an active 2025 that can be summed up in one word: deregulation. Under Chairman Carr the FCC has taken significant steps to reduce barriers to broadband deployment, modernize outdated regulatory regimes, and delete obsolete rules. These efforts include preempting State and local barriers to wireless infrastructure deployment, which I appreciate—as some of you all have heard me talk about, I am too familiar with calls dropping too often when I am driving around my own district—reforming the satellite licensing process, and ensuring that Next Generation 911 networks are reliable and interoperable, another issue that I have made a top priority of mine over the years.

And Chairman, I want to say thank you that the first official trip you took as Chairman was to western North Carolina to look at Hurricane Helene impacts on our communications network. So I appreciate the priority you have put on this issue.

Together, these efforts will accelerate closing the digital divide, unleash the new space economy, and strengthen America's wireless leadership. I applaud the FCC for this great work.

The FCC still has significant work ahead, including modernizing outdated media ownership rules. Last year I led a bipartisan letter with more than 70 Members of Congress, urging the Commission to revisit its broadcast ownership caps. Local broadcasters remain the most trusted sources of news for most Americans, yet they now compete with an uneven marketplace shaped by well-resourced new entrants, most notably big tech. Burdened by outdated regulations, local broadcasters are increasingly unable to compete, a reality reflected in newsroom closures and the growing concentration of influence among national networks and social media platforms.

Current ownership caps prevent broadcasters from combining or expanding operations, constraining their ability to invest in local journalism. Updating these caps would help ensure broadcasters remain viable and competitive without creating monopolies. It would empower local stations to better compete against dominant platforms. I urge the Commission to keep these realities in mind as you continue your deregulatory agenda.

A huge accomplishment this year was the Working Families Tax Cut Act direction to the FCC to auction 800 megahertz of spectrum

for commercial use. Making the spectrum available is essential to America's leadership in 5G and 6G. I am pleased that the agency has already begun this work by identifying at least 100 megahertz for auction in the upper C-band. As the agency looks for remaining spectrum both on its own and in coordination with others, I know you have important decisions to make, and I urge the FCC to be mindful of investment that has already taken place in the existing commercial bands such as the 6 gigahertz band and the CBRS band. The proposal your agenda laid out this month to expand unlicensed operations in the 6G band is a great, great first step.

Finally, I am a member of the bipartisan, bicameral Universal Services Fund Working Group. The USF, overseen by the FCC, helps support broadband access to high-cost rural areas, to schools and libraries, rural health centers, and low-income households. Last year the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of USF, but it is past time to reform this program to ensure the long-term sustainability and ensure the funds are reaching the right people. Congress needs to reexamine what the USF supports and how it is funded. A sustainable USF is essential to ensuring all Americans have access to affordable, reliable broadband. Given the FCC's role in administering the fund, I look forward to discussing ways to ensure the USF remains viable for future generations.

Today's hearing is an opportunity to discuss the many important issues before the FCC. Again, I thank the Commissioners for being here today, and I look forward to our conversations.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hudson follows:]

**Opening Statement for Chairman Richard Hudson
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”
January 14, 2026
*(As Prepared for Delivery)***

Good morning, and welcome to today’s oversight hearing – the first this congress – of the Federal Communications Commission. Welcome back to Chairman Carr—congratulations on your appointment as Chairman—and Commissioner Gomez. I want to extend a special welcome, or should I say welcome back, to Commissioner Trusty. Congratulations on your confirmation and welcome to your first oversight hearing at your old stomping ground. It is always exciting to see a former Energy and Commerce Committee staffer become a commissioner. I know Mr. Latta is very proud.

The FCC had an active 2025 that can be summed up in one word: deregulation. Under Chairman Carr, the FCC has taken significant steps to reduce barriers to broadband deployment, modernize outdated regulatory regimes, and delete obsolete rules. These efforts include preempting state and local barriers to wireless infrastructure deployment—which I appreciate, as some of y’all know already, I am too familiar with calls dropping as I drive around my own district—reforming the satellite licensing process, and ensuring that Next Generation 911 networks are reliable and interoperable, another issue

I've made my top priority over the years. Together, these efforts will accelerate closing the digital divide, unleash the new space economy, and strengthen America's wireless leadership. I applaud the FCC for this work.

The FCC still has significant work ahead, including modernizing outdated media ownership rules. Last year, I led a bipartisan letter with more than 70 members of Congress urging the Commission to revisit its broadcast ownership caps. Local broadcasters remain the most trusted source of news for most Americans, yet they now compete in an uneven marketplace shaped by well-resourced new entrants, most notably Big Tech. Burdened by outdated regulations, local broadcasters are increasingly unable to compete, a reality reflected in newsroom closures and the growing concentration of influence among national networks and social media platforms. Current ownership caps prevent broadcasters from combining or expanding operations, constraining their ability to invest in local journalism. Updating these caps would help ensure broadcasters remain viable and competitive without creating monopolies. It would empower local stations to better compete against dominant platforms. I urge the Commission to keep these realities in mind as it continues its deregulatory agenda.

A huge accomplishment this year was the Working Families Tax Cut's direction of the FCC to auction 800 MHz of spectrum for commercial use. Making this spectrum available is essential to America's leadership in 5G and 6G. I am pleased that the agency has already begun this work by identifying at least 100 MHz for auction in the upper C-Band. As the agency looks for the remaining spectrum, both on its own and in coordination with others, I know you have important decisions to make and I urge the FCC to be mindful of investment that has already taken place in existing commercial bands, such as the 6 GHz band and the CBRS band. The proposal your agenda laid out this month to expand unlicensed operations in the 6 GHz band is a great step.

Finally, I am a member of the bipartisan, bicameral Universal Service Fund Working Group. The USF, overseen by the FCC, helps support broadband access to high-cost rural areas, schools and libraries, rural health centers, and low-income households. Last year, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the USF. But it is past time to reform this program to ensure its long-term sustainability and ensure the funds are reaching the right people. Congress needs to reexamine what the USF supports and how it is funded. A sustainable USF is essential to ensuring all Americans have access to affordable, reliable broadband. Given the FCC's role in administering the Fund, I look forward to discussing ways to ensure the USF remains viable for future generations.

Today's hearing is an opportunity to discuss the many important issues before the FCC. I thank the Commissioners for being here today and I look forward to our conversation.

I now yield five minutes to my colleague, Ranking Member Matsui, for her opening statement.

Mr. HUDSON. I now recognize the ranking member, the gentlelady from California, for her opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DORIS O. MATSUI, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I am glad we are holding this hearing.

The Federal Communications Commission affects people's everyday lives. It determines whether you can call 911, whether your internet bill is affordable, and whether local news can do its job without political interference.

Oversight is not optional, it is our responsibility. The FCC serves the public, not any President, not any party, and not any one political agenda. It is supposed to be an independent, expert agency that promotes competition, protects public safety, and expands connectivity to our rural and urban communities. But President Trump and Chairman Carr have repeatedly abused the FCC's power.

We don't have speech police in America, we have the First Amendment. Yet under Chairman Carr we have seen a pattern of pressuring the media to tow the administration's line. He warned Disney and ABC stations, "We can do this the easy way or the hard way" to push them to take Jimmy Kimmel off the air. He threatened to investigate or revoke the license of local stations over content the administration doesn't like. And he has opened investigations into newsrooms' routine editing decisions such as CBS condensing an interview for time. That is not calling balls and strikes. That is censorship by intimidation.

Chairman Carr has stressed the standards of acting in the public interest and preventing news distortion beyond recognition. The FCC's own guidance sets a high bar for news distortion. The FCC can only go after deliberate distortion, not mere inaccuracy or difference of opinion. Yet, like the rest of the Trump administration, this FCC seems to believe it is above the law and the Constitution. That is why I introduced the Broadcast Freedom and Independence Act to draw a bright line. The FCC cannot target broadcasters based on viewpoint, and the White House cannot use the FCC to settle political scores.

The threats this FCC poses to journalistic independence have been local as well as national. In Sacramento people rely on local stations for wildfire updates, flood warnings, and breaking news. Local news is a lifeline for communities. When a handful of companies control local stations, communities lose independent voices, newsrooms face layoffs, and viewers are left with fewer trusted sources. That is why Congress set strict limits for how big any one TV station owner can get.

No company can reach more than 39 percent of U.S. households. That is the law. So it is deeply concerning when the Trump FCC appears open to deals that weaken local independents and plainly violates the law, deals like Nexstar's acquisition of TEGNA, which would create a media giant reaching 80 percent of U.S. households. And in Sacramento, Nexstar-TEGNA would put two of our four English-language local TV stations under the same owner. That

should raise flags for anyone who believes in protecting local news and competition.

Finally, I want to address cybersecurity. Our communications networks are critical infrastructure. They carry our calls, texts, and data, they support hospitals, small businesses, and emergency alerts, and they are under attack. After Salt Typhoon, the worst telecom hack in U.S. history, the FCC began moving toward enforceable cybersecurity requirements for companies—not just voluntary promises—but Chairman Carr reversed course, leaving our networks more exposed.

So today we are going to put this record under a spotlight. The public deserves to know what Chairman Carr thinks “public interest” means and why he is using it to pressure speech. Communities deserve to know why local voices are being squeezed by consolidation. And Americans deserve to know why cybersecurity protections were weakened at the moment we need them the most.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Matsui follows:]

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology Ranking Member Doris Matsui**

Hearing on “Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”

January 14, 2026

Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

I’m glad we’re holding this hearing. The Federal Communications Commission affects people’s everyday lives. It determines whether you can call 911, whether your internet bill is affordable, and whether local news can do its job without political interference. Oversight is not optional. It’s our responsibility.

The FCC serves the public... not any President... not any party... and not any one political agenda. It is supposed to be an independent, expert agency that promotes competition, protects public safety, and expands connectivity to our rural and urban communities.

But President Trump and Chairman Carr have repeatedly abused the FCC’s power. We don’t have speech police in America – we have the First Amendment. Yet under Chairman Carr we have seen a pattern of pressuring the media to toe the Administration’s line.

He warned Disney and ABC stations, “We can do this the easy way or the hard way,” to push them to take Jimmy Kimmel off the air. He threatened to investigate or revoke the license of local stations over content the Administration doesn’t like. And he’s opened investigations into newsrooms’ routine editing decisions—such as CBS condensing an interview for time. That’s not “calling balls and strikes.” That’s censorship by intimidation.

Chairman Carr has stretched the standards of acting in the “public interest” and preventing “news distortion” beyond recognition. The FCC’s own guidance sets a high bar. For news distortion, the FCC can only go after “deliberate distortion,” not “mere inaccuracy or difference of opinion.” Yet, like the rest of the Trump Administration, this FCC seems to believe it is above the law and the Constitution.

That’s why I introduced the Broadcast Freedom and Independence Act to draw a bright line: The FCC cannot target broadcasters based on viewpoint, and the White House cannot use the FCC to settle political scores.

The threats this FCC poses to journalistic independence have been local as well as national. In Sacramento, people rely on local stations for wildfire updates, flood warnings, and breaking news. Local news is a lifeline for communities. When a handful of companies control local stations, communities lose independent voices, newsrooms face layoffs, and viewers are left with fewer trusted sources. That’s why Congress set strict limits for how big any one TV

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And in Sacramento, Nexstar-Tegna would put two of our four English-language local TV news stations under the same owner. That should raise red flags for anyone who believes in protecting local news and competition.

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After Salt Typhoon, the worst telecom hack in U.S. history, the FCC began moving toward enforceable cybersecurity requirements for companies. Not just voluntary promises. But Chairman Carr reversed course, leaving our networks more exposed.

So today, we're going to put this record under a spotlight. The public deserves to know what Chairman Carr thinks "public interest" means, and why he's using it to pressure speech.

Communities deserve to know why local voices are being squeezed by consolidation. And Americans deserve to know why cybersecurity protections were weakened at the moment we need them most.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses, and I yield back.

Ms. MATSUI. I look forward to hearing from the witnesses, and I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

I now recognize the chairman of the full committee, the gentleman from Kentucky, for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BRETT GUTHRIE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

Mr. GUTHRIE. Well, thank you, Chairman Hudson, and thank you for holding this important oversight hearing, and thank you to our Commissioners for being here.

Commissioner Trusty, welcome back to the committee. We are glad to have you back here. And we always say—and it is true—that we get—the Members of Energy and Commerce get to work with the best people on Capitol Hill, and you were a part of our group at one time, and we appreciate having you, having you back.

And this is an exciting time for the FCC, an exciting time to be there. The Working Families Tax Act restored the FCC's Spectrum Auction Authority, which had elapsed for more than 2 years. It also set a target of 800 megahertz of spectrum to be identified and made available for commercial use. These actions will help meet the growing demand for spectrum, but also, more importantly, ensure the U.S. continues to be the leader in 5G and even developing 6G.

Under the first Trump administration the FCC made a significant amount of mid-band spectrum available for licensed use and opened up 1,200 megahertz of spectrum for unlicensed use. This strengthened our position as a global technology leader, and American innovators have seized the opportunity. But in the years ahead the United States must continue to lead in wireless innovation. Otherwise, adversaries like China will dominate this battle and set their own standards according to the values of the Chinese Communist Party. That is harmful to both our economic growth and our national security, and I would say the security of the world. Facing these risks, we must act quickly. I am pleased that the Commission under Chairman Carr has already started implementing aspects of this law and has prioritized security throughout the communications sector.

Another area where the FCC is working to maintain and expand American leadership is in space. Under Chairman Carr's leadership, the Commission has been hard at work modernizing satellite regulations. We have also seen—we have seen significant investment in innovation in space in recent years. Americans have long relied on GPS and other satellite-based communications services. But today more Americans use satellite services for connectivity at home and on the go. I am pleased that the Commission has made this a priority.

Finally, I have noted several times during this Congress the urgency of updating media regulation to allow regulated industries the opportunity to compete against new platforms, and specifically the Big Tech companies who are competing with broadcasting cable companies for advertising revenue and viewership. It is important to remove outdated regulations, and I appreciate Chairman Carr's

efforts to modernize these legacy regulatory structures to reduce burdens on incumbent industries.

This is an important time for the FCC. I look forward to hearing from the Commissioners.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Guthrie follows:]

**Opening Statement of Chairman Brett Guthrie
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”
January 14, 2026
(As Prepared for Delivery)**

Thank you, Chairman Hudson, for holding this important oversight hearing and thank you to the Commissioners for being with us today. It’s great to have you at the Energy and Commerce Committee.

This is an exciting time for the Federal Communications Commission. The Working Families Tax Cuts Act restored the FCC’s spectrum auction authority which had lapsed for more than two years. It also set a target of 800 megahertz of spectrum to be identified and made available for commercial use. These actions will help meet the growing demand for spectrum but also, more importantly, ensure that the U.S. continues to be a leader in 5G and even the developing 6G.

Under the first Trump Administration, the FCC made a significant amount of mid-band spectrum available for licensed use and opened up 1200 megahertz of spectrum for unlicensed use. This strengthened our position as a global technology leader, and American innovators have seized the opportunity.

But in the years ahead, the United States must continue to lead in wireless innovation. Otherwise, adversaries like China will dominate this battle and set their own standards according to the values of the Chinese Communist Party. That is harmful to both our economic growth and our national security. Facing these risks, we must act quickly. I am pleased that the Commission under Chairman Carr has already started implementing aspects of this law and has prioritized security throughout the communications sector.

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specifically big tech companies, who are competing with broadcast and cable companies for advertising revenue and viewership. It is important to remove outdated regulations, and I appreciate Chairman Carr's efforts to modernize these legacy regulatory structures to reduce burdens on incumbent industries.

This is an important time for the FCC. I look forward to hearing from the Commissioners, and I yield back.

Mr. GUTHRIE. And I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you, Chairman.

I now recognize the gentleman from New Jersey, the ranking member of the full committee, for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

One of President Trump's most defining qualities has been his contempt for American media and his hostility towards the First Amendment. Trump has repeatedly attacked and threatened late-night hosts for making jokes that bruise his ego, dismissed reporting he does not like as fake news, smeared journalists for merely doing their jobs, and taken completely meritless legal action against news networks that do not bend to his will. And he has also debased the office he holds by resorting to bullying and name-calling, recently telling a veteran reporter who asked a question about the Epstein files—and I quote—"Quiet, piggy."

On duty—or, I should say, our duty here is to conduct oversight of the Federal Communications Commission, and that has never been more critical than it is today because in Trump's ongoing crusade to chill free speech, punish news networks, and vilify American journalism, there has been no greater ally than Chairman Brendan Carr.

Over the last year Chairman Carr has grossly distorted the power and purpose of the FCC, he has weaponized the agency to benefit Trump and punish anyone who challenges him, he has rubber-stamped shady deals between media conglomerates when those deals have included monetary and political benefits for the President. He opened a sham—or sham investigations into small local media outlets for simply reporting on publicly available information about ICE raids. He weaponized the FCC's public-interest principles to bully news organizations, and Chairman Carr repeatedly violated the First Amendment by threatening and intimidating broadcasters who aired speech that the President does not like.

Now, you don't have to take my word for it. There is a reason why a Republican Senator, Ted Cruz, said that Chairman Carr's actions have been—and I quote—"right out of 'Goodfellas,' and dangerous as hell." This was never more apparent than when Chairman Carr threatened to revoke American broadcasters' licenses if they did not take action against a comedy program, "The Jimmy Kimmel Show," telling them—and I quote—"We can do this the easy way or the hard way." And let's be very clear about what happened there: The Federal Government threatened to wield its power to stamp out speech it did not like, and this is a violation of the First Amendment. This is censorship which does not belong in America.

There was a time when my Republican colleagues would have been up in arms over all this, when their allegiance to the First Amendment was greater than their loyalty to one man. But, obviously, that is not the case anymore, and the Chairman's misdeeds do not end with his clear and dangerous violations of the First

Amendment. After months of delay, Chairman Carr approved the Skydance-Paramount merger only after President Trump was paid \$16 million to settle a meritless lawsuit, offered \$20 million in free advertising, and received guarantees that CBS's editorial decisions would be tweaked in his favor.

This is what we call a quid pro quo facilitated by Chairman Carr, and that is why Representative Raskin and I have opened an investigation into this merger's approval. The American people deserve to know the truth and that some of us in Washington still believe that billionaires should have to play by the same rules as the rest of us.

Now, in sum, Chairman Carr has abandoned the FCC's role as an independent agency and has instead turned it into an instrument for President Trump's own personal and political benefit. In fact, during his testimony before the Senate he openly stated that the FCC is no longer an independent agency because the President says so. That is, in my opinion, madness. And it makes clear that the FCC is no longer operating in the public's interest. Quite the contrary, right now the FCC is failing the American people and Chairman Carr is failing his oath to the Constitution.

So while today's hearing is a good start, it is past time that this committee hold a media hearing—immediate hearing so we can dig deeper into these and other matters.

So finally, let me say Chairman Carr's decision to insert the FCC into policy debates where it has no authority to act while walking away from congressional mandates and existing FCC rules is also very disturbing. While President Trump and Chairman Carr may wish that the FCC could preempt State and local laws on artificial intelligence, Congress has not given the agency that power. The FCC also does not have the power to raise the 39 percent national TV ownership cap, which can only be changed by Congress.

So, frankly, Americans deserve a lot better than this. They deserve an FCC that upholds their constitutional rights, that acts in their interests, not in the private interests of the President.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

Hearing on “Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”

January 14, 2026

One of President Trump’s most defining qualities has been his contempt for American media and his hostility toward the First Amendment. Trump has repeatedly attacked and threatened late night hosts for making jokes that bruise his ego; dismissed reporting he does not like as “fake news;” smeared journalists for merely doing their jobs; taken completely meritless legal action against news networks that do not bend to his will; and debased the office he holds by resorting to bullying and name-calling, recently telling a veteran reporter who asked a question about the Epstein files, quote, “Quiet, Piggy.”

Our duty to conduct oversight of the FCC has never been more critical than it is today, because in Trump’s ongoing crusade to chill free speech, punish news networks, and vilify American journalism, there has been no greater ally than Chairman Brendan Carr.

Over the last year, Chairman Carr has grossly distorted the power and purpose of the FCC. He has weaponized the agency to benefit Trump and punish anyone who challenges him. He has rubber-stamped shady deals between media conglomerates when those deals have included monetary and political benefits for the President. He opened sham investigations into small, local media outlets for simply reporting on publicly available information about ICE raids. He weaponized the FCC’s public interest principles to bully news organizations. And he repeatedly violated the First Amendment by threatening and intimidating broadcasters who aired speech that the President does not like.

Don’t just take my word for it – there is a reason why Senator Ted Cruz said that Chairman Carr’s actions have been, and I quote, “right out of ‘Goodfellas’” and “dangerous as hell.”

This was never more apparent than when Chairman Carr threatened to revoke American broadcasters’ licenses if they did not take action against a comedy program – the Jimmy Kimmel Show – telling them, quote, “we can do this the easy way, or the hard way.” Let’s be very clear about what happened there: the federal government threatened to wield its power to stamp out speech it did not like. That is a violation of the First Amendment. That is censorship.

There was a time when my Republican colleagues would have been up in arms over it, when their allegiance to the First Amendment was greater than their loyalty to one man.

And Carr’s misdeeds do not end with his clear and dangerous violations of the First Amendment. After months of delay, Chairman Carr approved the Skydance-Paramount merger only after President Trump was paid \$16 million to settle a meritless lawsuit, offered \$20 million

January 14, 2026
Page 2

in free advertising, and received guarantees that CBS's editorial decisions would be tweaked in his favor. This is what we call a quid pro quo, and it was facilitated by Chairman Carr. That's why Representative Raskin and I have opened an investigation into this merger's approval. The American people deserve to know the truth – and that some of us in Washington still believe that billionaires should have to play by the same rules as the rest of us.

In sum, Chairman Carr has abandoned the FCC's role as an independent agency and has instead turned it into an instrument for President Trump's own personal and political benefit. In fact, during his testimony before the Senate, he openly stated that the FCC is no longer an independent agency because the President says so. That is madness, and it makes clear the FCC is no longer operating in the public's interest. Quite the contrary, right now the FCC is failing the American people, and Chairman Carr is failing his oath to the Constitution. So, while today's hearing is a good start, it is past time that this Committee hold a media hearing so we can dig deeper into these and other matters.

Finally, Chairman Carr's decision to insert the FCC into policy debates where it has no authority to act while walking away from Congressional mandates and existing FCC rules is also very disturbing. While President Trump and Chairman Carr may wish that the FCC could preempt state and local laws on artificial intelligence, Congress has not given the agency that power. The FCC also does not have the power to raise the 39 percent national TV ownership cap, which can only be changed by Congress.

Americans deserve a lot better than this. They deserve an FCC that upholds their constitutional rights and acts in their interests, not the President's.

I yield back.

Mr. PALLONE. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

We have now concluded with Member opening statements. The Chair reminds Members that, pursuant to committee rules, all Members' opening statements will be made part of the record.

We would like to thank our witnesses for being here today to testify before the subcommittee.

Our witnesses will have 5 minutes each to provide an opening statement, which will be followed by a round of questions from Members.

The witnesses here before us today are Chairman Brendan Carr, Chairman of the FCC; Commissioner Anna Gomez, Commissioner at the FCC; and Commissioner Olivia Trusty, Commissioner at the FCC.

Chairman Carr, you are recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

STATEMENT OF BRENDAN CARR, CHAIRMAN, AND ANNA M. GOMEZ AND OLIVIA TRUSTY, COMMISSIONERS, FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF BRENDAN CARR

Mr. CARR. Thank you. Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to testify. While this is not my first time appearing before the subcommittee, it is my first time doing so as Chairman. Like my colleagues, I have fond memories of this room. I started as an intern here over 20 years ago now.

I also want to start by saying how proud I am of the FCC's dedicated staff and everything they accomplished for the American people last year. The FCC delivered an historic set of wins in 2025, thanks to them.

I also want to applaud the important work that the subcommittee has accomplished this Congress. For instance, thanks to Chairman Hudson, Chairman Guthrie, and many of their fellow Members, the FCC's spectrum auction authority has now been restored through President Trump's Working Families Tax Cut Act, a major legislative accomplishment.

In terms of the FCC's work, the agency has been following President Trump's strong leadership and moved quickly to execute on an ambitious set of reforms. We are advancing a Build America agenda, a concrete plan to unleash high-speed infrastructure builds in communities across the country; we are reinvigorating the agency's consumer protection work, including cracking down on illegal robocalls; we are empowering broadcasters to meet their public-interest obligations; we are strengthening America's national security; and we are eliminating waste while modernizing agency operations.

Much of this represents a significant change from the Biden administration policies. Indeed, when I took over as Chairman of the FCC a year ago, the FCC faced several serious challenges. For instance, the Biden administration had allowed the U.S. to fall behind when it comes to one of the most important features of our economic strength, national security, and connectivity goals: spec-

trum. The FCC spectrum auction authority had lapsed 2 years earlier. The Biden administration had failed to tee up a single new spectrum band for auction, and President Biden's National Spectrum Strategy committed to freeing up exactly zero megahertz of spectrum.

On top of that, permitting reform was going nowhere. The Biden administration was layering on heavyhanded regulations that only made it harder for broadband builders to start turning dirt. To make matters worse, the Biden administration was pushing policies that would make services more expensive for Americans. We had to turn things around, and fast.

Thanks to President Trump's leadership, we are doing exactly that. As I detail in my written testimony, the FCC's build agenda focuses on unleashing the nation's broadband builders. It does so by advancing several core goals. For one, we are modernizing permitting rules and cutting red tape. For another, we are freeing up the airwaves that are necessary for America to lead the world again. We now have a massive new spectrum pipeline and are working on multiple new spectrum auctions. In fact, the FCC just voted at the end of last year on a plan to auction up to 180 megahertz of spectrum in the upper C-band.

In the secondary markets we are now seeing large chunks of spectrum move into the hands of competitors that can put it to productive use quickly. Indeed, one carrier alone announced that they built out spectrum they gained access to late last year. That is over 23,000 cell sites in record time, boosting 5G speeds by up to 80 percent.

In all of this, President Trump and the FCC are looking out for America's blue-collar workers. In this job I have had the chance to climb towers, splice fiber, and string lines with some of the country's most talented and hard-working telecom workers, and also some members of this committee, as well. So it is important to me that the FCC do its part to strengthen the Nation's telecom workforce.

We are already seeing changes. Providers are now adopting faster payment cycles. They are closing loopholes that allowed foreign fly-by-night groups to swoop in and undercut U.S. workers, and they are improving safety.

Finally, the FCC is now pushing the largest deregulatory effort in the agency's history. To date we have teed up for removal over 1,000 rules. In all of this we are seeing good results, including on affordability, where data just out shows that prices for wireless plans are now down over 4 percent since last January. I look forward to continuing to work with all of my Commission colleagues and the agency staff to deliver on this important agenda.

And in closing I want to thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Carr follows:]

**TESTIMONY OF
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

“OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION”

BEFORE THE

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

JANUARY 14, 2026

Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the invitation to testify. I am grateful for the opportunity to join with my Commission colleagues today and provide an update on the FCC’s work. I look forward to sharing with you the priorities we have been advancing at the FCC since last January.

While this is not my first time testifying before the Subcommittee, it is my first time appearing before you as Chairman, and there are a number of new Members on the Subcommittee since the last FCC oversight hearing in 2024. So I wanted to begin with a brief introduction.

I first joined the FCC as a staffer in 2012 over a dozen years ago. In the time since, I have had the privilege of serving in a number of different roles at the agency. I started out as an attorney in the FCC’s Office of General Counsel. I then worked as a legal advisor for a Commissioner. Following that, I served as the General Counsel of the FCC before President Trump nominated me to serve as a Commissioner in 2017. Having been confirmed by the Senate three times, I am very grateful to President Trump for his decision to designate me as Chairman of the FCC one year ago.

Importantly, and before all of that, I had the chance to intern with this Subcommittee more than 20 years ago now while I was still in law school. It provided me with valuable experiences that have stuck with me over the years.

Today, working alongside my Commission colleagues and leading the talented group of public servants at the agency is the honor of a lifetime. I am proud of the work the agency’s dedicated staff have been getting done for the American people.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize the important work that many of the Members here have accomplished this Congress. Thanks to Chairman Guthrie, Chairman Hudson, and many of their fellow Committee Members, the FCC’s spectrum auction authority has now been restored through President Trump’s Working Families Tax Cut Act. When the FCC’s auction authority lapsed for the first time ever back in 2023, it put America’s global

leadership and our connectivity goals at serious risk. I am glad we are correcting course now. I also want to applaud this Subcommittee and full Committee for your leadership on streamlining the broadband permitting process. Your reforms would drive down the prices for broadband services and ensure more families have access to high-speed connectivity.

Following President Trump's strong leadership, the FCC has moved quickly to execute on an ambitious set of reforms. We are advancing a Build America Agenda—a concrete plan to unleash high-speed infrastructure builds, drive down prices for consumers, and restore U.S. leadership in wireless. We are reinvigorating the agency's consumer protection work, including its efforts to crack down on illegal robocalls. We are empowering broadcasters to meet their public interest obligations. We are strengthening America's national security and advancing public safety. We are undertaking the largest deregulatory effort in the agency's history. And we are eliminating waste while improving efficiency and modernizing agency operations.

I detailed much of this agenda for the first time on a visit last summer to a tower construction company's training center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. While Sioux Falls might not be everyone's pick for rolling out a policy agenda for a federal agency headquartered in Washington, D.C., I could not think of a more appropriate setting. For one, the communities spread across South Dakota are a great reminder of the types of places we have to keep in mind as we develop connectivity policies back here in Washington. For another, I first visited that facility over seven years earlier—it was the first place that I ever put on a harness and hardhat in this job and climbed a tower. So it was a good reminder of the work ahead for America's broadband builders, and why the FCC's agenda should focus on making their jobs a little bit easier.

As I detailed in those remarks, the FCC's Build America Agenda focuses on a number of core priorities. I would like to provide the Subcommittee with an overview of those goals, and the work the FCC is undertaking to advance them and some of the agency's other top agenda items.

Unleashing High-Speed Infrastructure Builds.

The FCC is working to unleash high-speed infrastructure builds in communities across the country. We are modernizing permitting rules and cutting red tape. This includes making it easier for providers to retire slow and old copper lines and replace them with the modern, high-speed ones that consumers want. We are accelerating and simplifying the process for extending new lines across existing utility poles. And we are pursuing a range of additional steps that can remove barriers to deployment and streamline regulatory approaches. These actions will free up billions of dollars in capital that can go to work closing the digital divide.

At the same time, we are ending the Biden-era regulatory overreaches that only made it harder to build high-speed infrastructure in this country. Last year, for instance, the FCC reversed a Biden-era plan that would have slowed down infrastructure builds by subjecting tower builds to additional, needless, and onerous regulations. We also moved quickly to stop a Biden-era proposal to regulate so-called "bulk billing" arrangements, which could have increased the price of Internet service for Americans living in apartments by as much as 50 percent. And at the

very beginning of last year, a federal court invalidated the prior FCC's plan to expand government control of the Internet through heavy-handed, Title II regulation.

Restoring America's Leadership in Wireless.

The FCC has also been working hard to free up airwaves and restore the country's leadership in wireless. This is key because opening up spectrum for more intensive use drives down prices for consumers, brings families across the digital divide, and strengthens competition. But at the beginning of last year, the FCC had a lot of work to do on this front. Our spectrum auction authority had lapsed two years earlier. And there was no pipeline of spectrum for the agency to auction.

Thanks to President Trump's leadership, we are turning things around—and fast. At my very first meeting as FCC Chairman, we started a proceeding to examine ideas for freeing up a large swath of spectrum in the Upper C-band. The White House then initiated a ten-week “spectrum sprint” to study options for lighting up hundreds of megahertz of spectrum. And President Trump leaned in—making it clear that advancing America's 5G and 6G leadership would be a top priority for the Administration.

Many members of this Subcommittee then spearheaded the work to pass the spectrum provisions of the Working Families Tax Cut Act. Those provisions restored the FCC's auction authority and established a real spectrum pipeline—one with hard deadlines, clearing targets, and candidate bands.

For our part, the Working Families Tax Cut Act requires the FCC to auction at least 100 megahertz of spectrum in the Upper C-band by July 2027 and at least 300 megahertz total by 2034. The FCC has been working hard to implement those provisions in coordination with other federal agencies and stakeholders. Indeed, at the end of this past year, the Commission voted on a proposal to auction up to 180 megahertz of spectrum in the Upper C-band—exceeding the 100 megahertz minimum set by Congress.

Of course, a lot of work remains ahead on the C-band. Success will require continued interagency coordination, especially with our federal partners at the FAA and NTIA. It also requires extensive cooperation and information sharing between the wireless and aviation sectors. We have been working well with all stakeholders, and I am pleased with the collaboration we've seen to date.

But our work to advance U.S. spectrum leadership is not limited to the Upper C-band or even spectrum auctions alone. In the secondary markets, we are now seeing large swaths of spectrum moving into the hands of competitors that can put it to productive use quickly. On this score, AT&T recently agreed to purchase 50 megahertz of spectrum. And SpaceX has agreed to acquire 60 megahertz more. If approved, the latter transaction could advance America's position as the world-leader in next-generation, direct-to-cell technology. These secondary market moves are already showing results. Indeed, just recently, one carrier announced that they built out spectrum they gained access to in 2025 to over 23,000 cell sites in record time—boosting 5G speeds by up to 80 percent.

Boosting America's Space Economy.

President Trump has been clear that the Administration is ushering in a new Golden Age for space innovation in America. And President Trump's leadership could not come at a better time. Our nation is in the midst of what I refer to as a Space Race 2.0. This time around our main competitor is the government of China, which has its sights set on dominating in low-Earth orbit and up and down every orbital location.

The FCC's efforts on this front are possible thanks to the Executive Order President Trump signed last year to streamline regulations and foster a competitive commercial space industry. The FCC is following the White House's lead. We are looking to add rocket fuel to our space economy and give the private sector a predictable regulatory framework by focusing on four main principles: speed, simplicity, security, and satellite spectrum abundance. We are already clearing out application backlogs and standardizing procedures in furtherance of that agenda.

Strengthening America's Telecom Workers.

I have had the chance to climb towers, splice fiber, and string lines with some of the country's most talented and hardworking telecom crews. So it is important to me that the FCC do its part to strengthen the nation's telecom workforce. I am determined to ensure that our nation's tower and telecom crews are rewarded for their work. And they are poised to benefit greatly from President Trump's leadership and the agency's Build America Agenda.

We are already seeing good results. Over the last year, many communications providers have committed to a range of workforce reforms that will result in a more sustainable environment for America's tower and telecom crews. Providers are now adopting faster payment cycles and fairer pricing metrics. They are minimizing layers of subcontracting, which will allow for greater oversight of crews and stronger safety protections. And they are closing loopholes that allowed foreign, fly-by-night groups to swoop in and undercut U.S. crews. The FCC will continue to look out for American workers.

Reinvigorating the FCC's Consumer Protection Work.

The FCC has been working hard to reinvigorate and modernize our consumer protection work. Of course, the issue the FCC hears about the most through consumer complaints is illegal robocalls. And on this front, the FCC has started a new campaign to tackle illegal robocalls at every point in the call path. For years, the government's efforts in this area have been described as a game of whack-a-mole. When we address one type of scam, or fine a bad actor, another one pops up using a new workaround.

So we are now looking at every portion of the call lifecycle. We are focusing on prevention—stopping bad actors from ever originating calls in the first place. We are pushing carriers to block more illegal robocalls before they reach consumers. We are giving consumers better tools to distinguish legitimate calls from scams. We are looking to curb scam calls that

originate outside of the United States by deterring the use of U.S. area codes for calls originating overseas. And we are stepping up enforcement to make sure every provider doing business in the U.S. takes proactive steps to mitigate robocalls. Indeed, on my watch, the FCC has now removed over 1,200 non-compliant voice service providers from the Robocall Mitigation Database, which functionally disconnects them from the U.S. phone network. The FCC will continue to crack down on shady providers using all of the tools at our disposal.

Our work on consumer protection matters also includes our efforts to help Americans access the right resources during a time of crisis. In 2025, for instance, we adopted rules requiring wireless providers to develop the capability to transmit georouting data when someone sends a text to 988. This means that someone reaching out for help during a crisis will get the localized help they need.

Empowering Local Broadcasters.

The FCC is working to empower local broadcasters to serve the public interest and meet the needs of their communities. As Congress, the Supreme Court, and the FCC have all made clear, broadcasters are different than every other distributor of media. Specifically, broadcasters are required by both the Communications Act and the terms of their FCC-issued licenses to operate in the public interest. This sets them apart from cable channels, podcasts, streaming services, social media, and countless other types of distributors that have no public interest obligation. The FCC's broadcast hoax rule, its news distortion policy, its political equal opportunity regulation, its prohibition on obscene, indecent, and profane content, its localism requirements—all of those and more apply uniquely to broadcasters. Congress has instructed the FCC to enforce public interest requirements on broadcasters. The FCC should do exactly that.

Television broadcasters have this public interest obligation because the government has given them the unique privilege of using a scarce national resource—the public airwaves—and in doing so has necessarily excluded others that might want to broadcast their own programming over that same spectrum. That is why they are required to serve, not just their own narrow interest, but the public interest, including the needs of their local communities.

To ensure that broadcasters can meet their public interest obligations, the FCC has taken a number of actions, including seeking public comment for the first time in more than 15 years on the relationship between the large, national programmers on the one hand and the many local broadcast television stations on the other. Comments in that proceeding suggest that many local broadcasters are concerned that the national programmers have amassed enormous power and influence in recent years and have made it more challenging for local broadcasters to fulfill their public interest obligations.

The FCC is going to continue its efforts to empower local broadcasters to meet their public interest obligations.

Promoting National Security and Advancing Public Safety.

The FCC significantly ramped up its efforts this past year to promote our country's national security and advance public safety. For one, at the beginning of my tenure as Chairman, I stood up a new Council on National Security within the FCC to leverage all of the agency's authorities, expertise, and relevant workstreams to counter the threats posed by foreign adversaries, including the government of China. This Council is already paying dividends. The FCC cracked down on what we call "Bad Labs"—labs that review and approve electronics for use in the United States, but are owned or controlled by foreign adversary governments. The Council on National Security also executed Operation Clean Carts, which worked with e-commerce platforms to take down millions of listings of devices on the FCC's Covered List or otherwise prohibited for sale in the United States.

And that's not all. Last May, the FCC started the process of identifying foreign adversaries that hold licenses or authorizations in the communications sector, in line with the policy bipartisan FACT Act. Later this month, the FCC will vote on an Order to advance this proceeding. Last August, the FCC adopted new rules on undersea cable security, following President Trump's America First Investment Policy Memorandum. In those rules, we took action to unleash the build out of undersea cables to ensure the U.S. leads the world on AI infrastructure, as the President's AI Action Plan calls for, while mitigating threats to undersea cables from foreign adversaries. Last October, the FCC closed two loopholes that provided no check on old models of covered equipment—potential spy gear—to be imported or sold, as well as allowed devices to be approved that contain covered equipment as module components. And most recently, in the wake of SALT Typhoon, the FCC has worked directly with carriers to ensure that they are adapting their cybersecurity practices and hardening their networks against future attacks, including by working with federal partners like the FBI, NSA, and CISA to receive technical assistance on networks, rapidly share information, and working together to strengthen cyber defenses.

Most recently, the FCC is doing its part to unleash American drone dominance. For instance, following a national security determination, the FCC added foreign-produced drones to the agency's Covered List, while recognizing the clear pathways that have been provided for the continued operation of current and future drones.

Beyond threats from foreign adversaries, the FCC also continues to foster network resilience in the face of natural disasters. My first trip as Chairman of the FCC was to Western North Carolina where I visited several of Hurricane Helene's hardest-hit areas and met with emergency management and public safety officials, telecom crews, broadcasters, and other government representatives that worked to rebuild those communities. Last July, we hosted a public roundtable focused on collaboration between communications service providers, electric utilities, and emergency management officials. Following the discussion, we published Cross-Sector Best Practices for Hurricane Season in September focused on disaster recovery, "blue sky" coordination efforts, and mutual cross-sector aid and assistance, building on the work of the Mandatory Disaster Response Initiative.

In August 2025, the FCC also began the process of a ground-up re-examination of the national alert and warning systems, including the Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts. The underlying frameworks of these systems are 31 and 13 years old, respectively, so it is important to ensure the FCC is leveraging the latest technology to save lives.

The FCC has also worked to strengthen and modernize our Nation's public safety systems. Last March, the FCC proposed requirements to improve location precision for 911 callers in multistory buildings. We also moved forward with a proposal that would make the transition from legacy 911 to NG911 effective and reliable without creating new vulnerabilities in critical public safety networks.

Streamlining Regulations and Modernizing Agency Operations.

Right now, the FCC is also undertaking the largest deregulatory initiative in the agency's history. At the beginning of my tenure as Chairman, I launched an effort titled "In Re: Delete, Delete, Delete." Since then, the FCC has been reviewing every rule, regulation, and guidance document for the purpose of eliminating unnecessary regulatory burdens, and we sought feedback from stakeholders to get their perspectives as well.

I am now pleased to report that to date the FCC has removed or teed up for removal 1,108 rules and regulations, 134,928 words, and 312 pages of the Code of Federal Regulations. The FCC has also worked to close out inactive dockets and has terminated a record 2,048 inactive proceedings. These initiatives further the Commission's goal of promoting good governance, increasing efficiency, and modernizing agency processes.

Improving efficiency at the FCC does not stop with examining the CFR and open FCC dockets. We are also working to be good stewards of the taxpayers' funds. In Fiscal Year 2025, we generated millions of dollars in savings by eliminating or modifying unnecessary contracts. We also brought agency staff back into the building to foster in-person collaboration to deliver on the FCC's mission.

As you can tell, the FCC and its hardworking staff have been moving fast to deliver great results for the American people last year. I thank them for their dedicated service. And I look forward to the important work ahead in the coming year.

* * *

In closing, I want to thank you again Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, and Members of the Subcommittee for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

Commissioner Gomez, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF ANNA M. GOMEZ

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you. Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chair Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, Vice Chair Allen, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

It is worth stepping back and asking where the FCC has been directing its energy. Too often that energy has gone into culture war fights rather than protecting consumers and expanding access to reliable, affordable broadband. From my perspective, the FCC has drifted from its mission in ways that should concern this committee.

Let me begin with the First Amendment. For months this FCC has asserted an apparent roving mandate to police speech that this administration does not like, invoking an undefined and unchecked concept known as the public interest standard. This standard is being treated as a license to weigh in on content, viewpoint, and editorial judgment. The FCC's job is not to police content, root out media bias, or guarantee favorable coverage for any administration. Its responsibility is to regulate communications infrastructure and markets, not censor the speech that flows through them.

Both the First Amendment and the Communications Act protect against the FCC interfering with speech and engaging in censorship. In a free society the Government does not get to decide what speech is acceptable or aligned with its views. When the Government's media regulator claims the power to judge content or to police bias, we move away from oversight and toward censorship and control. That is why it is so important for the Commission to define what it means by the public interest standard, something I have called on it to do repeatedly. It is also why Congress must insist on guardrails and protect against the FCC acting as an arbiter of free speech.

I do want to acknowledge the Commission's continued bipartisan work on robocalls, which remain the FCC's top source of consumer complaints. But beyond that, we are seeing the FCC retreat from core responsibilities that help make communications more affordable, more transparent, and more accessible.

Affordability is now one of the biggest barriers to staying connected. Programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program helped millions of households afford basic service. When that support lapsed, the impact was immediate. Yet the Commission has failed to treat that loss with the urgency it demands. Instead, what we have seen is a clear pattern of retreat from practical, consumer-focused initiatives.

The Commission eliminated E-Rate support for school bus connectivity and hotspot lending by schools and libraries. For many students, seniors, and families, these programs were the only reliable connection to the internet. Ending them removed one of the most effective tools we had to help people participate in the digital economy and to avoid being left behind.

The Commission has rolled back limits on exorbitant prison communication rates. These communications are often the only way for those in prison to stay connected to the support they need to return to society without turning back to crime. Vulnerable families will now be paying higher phone rates because of this FCC's actions.

The Commission has proposed weakening the broadband nutrition labels it previously adopted, making it harder for consumers to compare prices, speeds, and fees before they sign up for service, and making it easier for prices to rise.

The Commission has stalled the cybersecurity trustmark after years of bipartisan work, leaving consumers without a practical tool in an increasingly risky digital marketplace.

And in a nation that is home to millions of non-English speakers and that welcomes millions of international visitors each year, the Commission has delayed bipartisan efforts to provide consumers with multilingual emergency alerts. As we prepare to host the World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, language barriers should not become a public safety risk.

None of the policies this administration has sidelined was symbolic. The rollback reflects a Commission spending less time on consumer needs and more time on ideological priorities and the needs of billion-dollar corporations. Without sustained attention to affordability and consumer protection, even the largest investments in broadband deployment, including the BEAD program, risk becoming digital bridges to nowhere. If students cannot afford broadband, if families cannot trust the security of their devices, if incarcerated individuals are cut off from support, and if emergency alerts fail to reach whole communities, then no amount of deregulatory policy will close that divide.

We should measure success from AI and other investments in human outcomes: Who is connected? Who is protected? And who is fully included? That is the standard that the FCC should be held to and the responsibility it must return to if it is to fulfill its mission.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.
[The prepared statement of Ms. Gomez follows:]

**SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ANNA M. GOMEZ
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

JANUARY 14, 2026

- For months, this FCC has asserted an apparent roving mandate to police speech that this Administration does not like, invoking an undefined and unchecked concept known as the “public interest” standard.
- The First Amendment protects against government interference with speech, and the Communications Act prohibits the FCC from engaging in censorship.
- FCC must clearly define what it means by the public interest standard. Congress must insist on guardrails that prevent content-based regulation and protect against the FCC acting as an arbiter of speech.
- We’ve seen a clear pattern of retreat from practical, consumer-focused initiatives.
 - The Commission eliminated E-Rate support for school bus connectivity and hotspot lending by schools and libraries. Ending these programs removed one of the most effective tools we had to help people participate in the digital economy and avoid being left behind.
 - The Commission has rolled back limits on exorbitant prison communication rates. Vulnerable families will now be paying higher phone rates because of the FCC’s actions.
 - The Commission has proposed to weaken the broadband nutrition labels it previously adopted, making it harder for consumers to compare prices, speeds, and fees before they sign up for service, and making it easier for prices to rise.
 - The Commission has stalled the Cybersecurity Trust Mark after years of bipartisan work, leaving consumers without a practical tool in an increasingly risky digital marketplace.
 - In a nation that is home to millions of non-English speakers and that welcomes millions of international visitors each year, the Commission has delayed bipartisan efforts to provide consumers with multilingual emergency alerts.
- We should measure success not in deployment statistics, but in human outcomes: who is connected, who is protected, and who is fully included. That is the standard the FCC should be held to, and the responsibility it must return to if it is to fulfill its mission.

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ANNA M. GOMEZ
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, Chair Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, Vice Chair Allen, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

As we enter 2026, I think it is worth stepping back and asking not just what the Federal Communications Commission has done for consumers, but where it has been directing its energy. Too often, that energy has gone into culture-war fights instead of the day-to-day work of protecting consumers and expanding access to reliable and affordable broadband.

From my perspective, the FCC has drifted from its mission in two ways that should concern this Committee. First, it has exercised its authority in ways that raise serious First Amendment concerns. Second, it has retreated from meaningful consumer protections that make a difference in people's lives.

Let me begin with the First Amendment.

For months, this FCC has asserted an apparent roving mandate to police speech that this Administration does not like, invoking an undefined and unchecked concept known as the "public interest" standard.

Instead of functioning as a principle intended to serve the public, this standard is being treated as a license to weigh in on content, viewpoint, and editorial judgment.

This is not what the FCC was created to do. The Commission's job is not to police content, root out media bias, or guarantee favorable coverage for any administration. Its responsibility is to regulate communications infrastructure and markets, not censor the speech that flows through them.

The First Amendment protects against government interference with speech, and the Communications Act prohibits the FCC from engaging in censorship. In a free society, the government does not decide what speech is acceptable or aligned with its views. When the government's media regulator claims the power to judge content or police bias, we move away from oversight and closer toward censorship and control.

That is why it is so important for the FCC to clearly define what it means by the public interest standard, something I have called on it to do repeatedly. It is also why Congress must insist on guardrails that prevent content-based regulation and protect against the FCC acting as an arbiter of speech.

At the same time the Commission has pushed beyond its proper role, I do want to acknowledge the Commission's continued bipartisan work on robocalls, which remain the FCC's top source of consumer complaints. But beyond that, we are seeing the FCC retreat in core areas that make communications more affordable, more transparent, and more accessible.

Affordability is now one of the biggest barriers to staying connected.¹ Programs like the Affordable Connectivity Program helped millions of households afford basic service. When that support lapsed, the impact was immediate. Yet rather than making affordability a central priority, the Commission has failed to treat that loss with the urgency it demands.

Instead, what we have seen is a clear pattern of retreat from practical, consumer-focused initiatives.

- The Commission eliminated E-Rate support for school bus connectivity and hotspot lending by schools and libraries. For many students, seniors, and families, these programs were their only reliable connection to the internet. Ending them removed one of the most effective tools we had to help people participate in the digital economy and avoid being left behind.
- The Commission has rolled back limits on prison communication rates that were mandated by law. For those in prison, these communications are often the only way to stay connected to family and maintain the support needed to return successfully to society without turning back to crime. Vulnerable families will be paying higher phone rates because of the FCC's actions, undermining both basic fairness and the promise of just communications.

¹ Kelly Wert, *Every State Identifies Broadband Affordability as Primary Barrier to Closing Digital Divide* (October 4, 2024), <https://www.pew.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2024/10/04/every-state-identifies-broadband-affordability-as-primary-barrier-to-closing-digital-divide>.

- The Commission has proposed to weaken the broadband nutrition labels we adopted under the last Administration. These labels were meant to show consumers clear information about prices, speeds, and fees before they sign up for service. In plain terms, they told people how much they were actually paying and what they were actually getting. When that information is watered down, it becomes harder to compare options and easier for prices to rise.
- The Commission has stalled the Cybersecurity Trust Mark after years of bipartisan work. This voluntary, market-based program was designed to help consumers identify connected devices that meet baseline cybersecurity standards. Those delays have left consumers without a practical tool in an increasingly risky digital marketplace.
- The Commission has delayed bipartisan efforts to provide consumers with multilingual emergency alerts. In a nation that is home to millions of non-English speakers and that welcomes millions of international visitors each year, that delay means life-saving alerts may not reach those who need them most. As we prepare to host premier international events like the World Cup and the 2028 Olympics, language barriers should not needlessly become a public safety risk.

None of the policies this Administration has sidelined are symbolic. Each one was designed to make communications more affordable, more transparent, more secure, or more accessible. Taken together, their rollback or delay reflects a Commission that is spending less time on the needs of consumers and more time on ideological priorities and the needs of billion-

dollar corporations. In today's world, universal service cannot simply mean building networks. It means ensuring people can actually afford to use them. Without government agencies like the FCC focused on affordability and consumer protection, even the largest investments in broadband deployment, including the BEAD program, risk becoming digital bridges to nowhere.

How we define success here matters. Leadership in AI and other investments should not be measured by how many miles of fiber we lay or how many data centers we build, but by whether people can actually connect, participate, and benefit from a new digital economy. If students cannot afford broadband, if families cannot trust the security of their devices, if incarcerated individuals are cut off from support, and if emergency alerts fail to reach whole communities, then no amount of infrastructure will close that divide. We should measure success not in deployment statistics, but in human outcomes: who is connected, who is protected, and who is fully included. That is the standard the FCC should be held to, and the responsibility it must return to if it is to fulfill its mission.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

Commissioner Trusty, you are recognized for 5 minutes for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF OLIVIA TRUSTY

Ms. TRUSTY. Thank you. Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

It has been 6 months since I was sworn in as a Commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission. During that time I have focused on policies to advance access to high-speed connectivity, strengthen the resilience of the Nation's communications networks, and restore U.S. leadership in next-generation communications technologies. A critical part of that work has been the opportunity to travel across the country and around the world to engage directly with those who build, maintain, and rely on our communications infrastructure and technologies. From Jackson, Mississippi, to Eek, Alaska, and abroad, I have seen firsthand how fixed, mobile, and satellite connectivity is delivering on the promise of job creation, technological innovation, and economic prosperity.

In Jackson, Mississippi I saw how broadband is delivering quality, lifesaving care straight into the homes of Mississippians across the Magnolia State. Doctors at the University of Mississippi Medical Center are treating chronic illnesses, managing high-risk pregnancies, and delivering mental healthcare by video to rural communities that would otherwise go without these essential services.

In Bethel and Eek, Alaska, I saw how access to broadband is transforming lives. These Alaskan towns are home to some of the most rugged and hard-to-reach terrain, and broadband is enabling Alaska Natives and non-Natives alike to contribute to and benefit from the global digital economy while maintaining their treasured culture and way of life.

And last fall I traveled to Baku, Azerbaijan, to represent the United States at the International Telecommunication Union's World Telecommunication Development Conference. There, ministers and regulators from around the globe highlighted their progress on closing the digital divide within their nation's borders. They also used this forum to seek U.S. guidance and leadership on maximizing spectrum efficiency, building trusted networks and secure supply chains, and creating a regulatory environment that invites continued innovation, investment, and competition while protecting consumers and enhancing public safety. These are issues we confront at the FCC in almost every proceeding. They also inform the three priorities guiding my work: universal connectivity, network resilience, and U.S. leadership.

Ensuring that every American has access to communications services has been the FCC's core mission since its founding. In addition to the Universal Service Fund, removing regulatory barriers that impede broadband deployment is critical to connecting every American. I commend members of this subcommittee for advancing several legislative proposals to reform the permitting process which will help accelerate the delivery of high-speed broadband services to homes and businesses across the country.

In an era of growing digital hostility, however, achieving universal connectivity requires increased focus on the deployment of trusted and resilient network infrastructure. Our communications networks are the backbone of both our economy and our defense. From robocall scams to foreign-made network components to infrastructure vandalism and copper theft, the threats are evolving rapidly.

Recent Commission actions to remove foreign adversary-owned labs from our equipment authorization process, to block illegal robocalls from exploiting American consumers, and to garner commitments from broadband providers to harden their network infrastructure will enhance network integrity while allowing us to maintain agility in responding to new and emerging threats.

U.S. leadership in next-generation technologies—6G, AI, emerging commercial services in space, and more—hinges on our ability to deploy high-speed and resilient communications infrastructure to every corner of the country. Thanks to President Trump and members of this subcommittee, the Commission's general spectrum auction authority has been restored, along with the creation of a long-term spectrum pipeline. This positions America to lead in wireless innovation and beyond. Our continued success in technological advancement will ultimately be determined by a domestic and international regulatory environment that emphasizes innovation, competition, and global cooperation.

Importantly, U.S. leadership isn't inevitable. It must be earned. I look forward to working with members of this subcommittee, the full committee, and our interagency partners to ensure that the United States is positioned to capture first-mover advantages in technologies that will define the future of our economic and national security.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for this opportunity to testify, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Trusty follows:]

Statement of The Honorable Olivia Trusty
Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission
U.S. House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
January 14, 2026

Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

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A critical part of that work has been the opportunity to travel across the country and around the world to engage directly with those who build, maintain, and rely on our communications infrastructure and technologies. From Jackson, Mississippi, to Eek, Alaska, and abroad, I have seen firsthand how fixed, mobile, and satellite connectivity is delivering on the promise of job creation, technological innovation, and economic prosperity.

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In an era of growing digital hostility, however, achieving universal connectivity requires increased focus on the deployment of trusted and resilient network infrastructure. Our communications networks are the backbone of both our economy and our defense. From robocall scams to foreign-made network components, to infrastructure vandalism and copper theft, the threats are evolving rapidly. Recent Commission actions to remove foreign adversary-owned labs from our equipment authorization process, to block illegal robocalls from exploiting American consumers, and to garner commitments from broadband providers to harden their network infrastructure, will enhance network integrity, while allowing us to maintain agility in responding to new and emerging threats.

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determined by a domestic and international regulatory environment that emphasizes innovation, competition, and global cooperation. Importantly, U.S. leadership isn't inevitable, it must be earned. I look forward to working with members of this Subcommittee, the full Committee, and our interagency partners to ensure the United States is positioned to capture first-mover advantages in technologies that will define the future of our economic and national security.

Mr. Chairman, thank you, again, for this opportunity to testify. I look forward to your questions.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you very much, and I would like to take a moment of personal privilege and welcome someone I see in the audience here: former chairman of this subcommittee and the chairman of the full committee, Greg Walden.

Welcome back. Good to see you, sir.

We will now begin questioning, and I recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Chairman Carr, for the United States to maintain its leadership in wireless innovation, we need to make both licensed and unlicensed spectrum available for commercial use.

Can you tell us why a balanced spectrum policy is so important?

Mr. CARR. Yes, U.S. leadership in wireless is part and parcel of our geopolitical leadership. We need the full toolkit out there, both licensed and unlicensed. In fact, on the unlicensed side we are going to be voting at the FCC later this month to supercharge WiFi so Americans get better, faster, more powerful WiFi. I think it is a great complement to the other work that we are already doing on the license side.

Mr. HUDSON. I appreciate that.

Commissioner Trusty, do you have anything to add to that?

Ms. TRUSTY. Sure. Thank you for the question, and thank you for your leadership on spectrum policy.

I have been a proponent of an all-of-the-above approach to spectrum policy, where we can accommodate a variety of users, use cases, and technologies. Our immediate priority is the AWS-3 spectrum auction that will start in June, and we are also working on rules for the upper C-band auction, which will create opportunities for licensed spectrum.

But we also need more spectrum for unlicensed uses, so—to support WiFi and IoT-based applications. And we need spectrum for satellite connectivity and space-based applications. So I think that having licensed, unlicensed, satellite spectrum is important for promoting innovation, investment, and competition, and strengthening U.S. leadership in next-generation technologies.

Mr. HUDSON. I agree.

Chairman Carr, the White House recently released a Presidential memorandum on 6G. How does this action affect your collaboration with NTIA on identifying additional bands for auction?

Mr. CARR. Well, thanks again to the work of you and this committee and President Trump, we now have a real, concrete spectrum pipeline, 800 megahertz. And as part of that we are collaborating very closely with NTIA, with Commerce, with the White House to make sure we are identifying the right target bands, studying them, and staying on track. And so that is a really good thing.

Again, we—as a country, we are behind a little bit on 3G, but we caught up on 4G. We caught up on 5G. And now President Trump is making sure that the U.S. leads the way on next-generation technology too.

Mr. HUDSON. Great. Chairman Carr, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I am part of the bipartisan, bicameral Universal Service Fund Working Group that is trying to implement long-term reforms to ensure sustainability for USF into the future.

How does the USF ensure that broadband remains affordable for all Americans?

Mr. CARR. The Universal Service Fund has played a key role over the years, ensuring connectivity for Americans all across the country. We are doing work right now, including making sure that we are ending any unlawful expenditures that were taking place. We are policing better for waste, fraud, and abuse in these programs. We are going to work collaboratively with the bipartisan, bicameral task force that you talked about.

And more generally, on affordable, we are making some really good progress here. Again, just recent data out, wireless cell phone plans are down 4 percent since January 2025 alone. They are down over 7 percent from Biden-era highs. Right when we came into office we ended a Biden-era plan that could have spiked the price of internet services for Americans living in apartment buildings by—at least one study—up to 50 percent. So there is a lot more work to go, but I am glad that we are heading in the right direction.

Mr. HUDSON. Great. What reform ideas should Congress consider, particularly on the distribution side, as we evaluate the future of the USF?

Mr. CARR. Well, one thing that is important I think Congress is focusing on—should focus on—is technology neutrality. You know, we want high-speed fiber connections in so many parts of the country, but there's other places where you are going to have fixed wireless or a new generation of low Earth orbit satellite, or 5G or 6G. So we want to do this in a way that makes sure that Americans get the connectivity they expect and deserve, but we do it in the most efficient way possible.

Mr. HUDSON. I agree. So public safety communications is also a top priority of mine. It includes everything from upgrading our 911 systems to NG911 to ensuring that we quickly restore communications following a disaster. Again, I appreciate your visit to western North Carolina and looking at this issue.

What are your top priorities in improving our public safety communications?

Mr. CARR. Well, look, your call to 911 absolutely always has to go through. That is a system that we never want to see fail. And we are taking a lot of steps to harden that. We are working to collaborate across different industry segments, including power and utility and telecom crews so that when you rush into a place like western North Carolina after Helene, that we are making progress and not stepping on each other.

So we are encouraging that, and we are taking other efforts to encourage this broader transition to all IP networks, which, again, can really strengthen the resilience and performance of the 911 and public safety system.

Mr. HUDSON. Great, and I appreciate that. My time is getting very low, and I can't hold everybody accountable if I go over.

So I believe I will stop and recognize our ranking member, Ms. Matsui, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Ms. MATSUI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The Trump administration is weaponizing the FCC to punish speech it doesn't like. A free press is supposed to hold power accountable. Commissioner Gomez, President Trump has threatened

to revoke the licenses of NBC and ABC, claiming they are biased and give him only bad publicity or press.

Yes or no, does the FCC have the power to take licenses away from network affiliates solely for the content of their news coverage?

Ms. GOMEZ. No, they do not.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. Chairman Carr has consistently used the FCC's news distortion policy to justify investigating broadcasters.

Can you briefly describe the news distortion policy, and whether in your view it allows the FCC to revoke or not renew a broadcast license for perceived bias?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

So the news distortion policy covers local broadcasters broadcasting news—a news about a significant event, but it requires intentionality to mislead about a significant event, not merely an incidental event. And it also cannot be used if you just simply disagree with the content, and if it is just an incidental mistake.

Now, the courts have looked at the constitutionality of the doctrine, and what they have said is under the constitutional scrutiny, because we are looking at deliberate distortion and not just mere inaccuracy or a difference of opinion, that it would uphold the constitutionality of the news distortion policy. Under this FCC, however, we appear to be using the news distortion policy to go after any content that we don't like—

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Ms. GOMEZ [continuing]. And using that in conjunction with this vague public-interest standard.

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Chairman Carr, the Communications Act requires broadcasters to serve the public interest. Does that standard allow the FCC to censor or interfere with broadcasters' free speech under the First Amendment?

I just want a yes or no here.

Mr. CARR. What the Supreme Court has said on this issue is that no one has a First Amendment right to a license. So the FCC enforcing the public interest—

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Standard on broadcasters, according to the Supreme Court, doesn't violate the First Amendment and doesn't constitute—

Ms. MATSUI. So where do you come down?

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Censorship—

Ms. MATSUI. Is it yes or no? Just—I want to just hear from you yes or no.

Mr. CARR. I am sorry, could you repeat it?

Ms. MATSUI. Yes or no. I mean, just don't quote the Supreme Court. Where are you, yes or no?

Mr. CARR. Look, the FCC has an obligation to enforce the public interest, and that is very unique—

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. As to broadcasters. Again, if you step back, broadcasters—

Ms. MATSUI. OK, OK.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Are unique among all other distributors of news information——

Ms. MATSUI. OK, reclaiming——

Mr. CARR [continuing]. A license.

Ms. MATSUI. I don't need a speech now. Does the public interest include informing the public about what their Government, including ICE, is doing in their local community? Yes or no?

Mr. CARR. The core ingredient of the public interest standard is to identify the needs of your local community and make sure you are meeting that.

Ms. MATSUI. OK, so it is a yes, right?

Mr. CARR. Broadcasters have an obligation to identify and meet the needs of the local communities they serve.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. When you talk about the public interest, does the public include Americans who disagree with the President? I just want a yes or no here.

Mr. CARR. Does the public include people that disagree with the President?

Ms. MATSUI. Who disagree——

Mr. CARR. Yes.

Ms. MATSUI [continuing]. With the President. When you talk about public interest, does that include Americans who disagree with the President? I just want a yes or no.

Mr. CARR. Yes, the public includes people——

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. That disagrees with the President.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. In 2021 you wrote that a newsroom's decision about what stories to cover and how to frame them should be beyond the reach of any government official. Do you stand by that today? Yes or no?

Mr. CARR. Yes, in that context there were members of this committee that wrote letters to cable companies—which, again, aren't broadcasters, no public interest obligation—and they pressured those cable companies to drop cable channels—Fox News, OAN, and Newsmax—because the members of this committee described them as right-wing outlets.

Ms. MATSUI. OK.

Mr. CARR. I think when the Democrats on this committee did that, it was wrong.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. So to recap, we agree that broadcasters are protected by the First Amendment. Is that right?

Mr. CARR. Yes.

Ms. MATSUI. The public interest includes informing communities about government action. Correct?

And the FCC, a government agency, shouldn't influence newsrooms' decisions. Correct?

OK, so why did the FCC open an investigation to into KCBS in San Francisco after it covered the January 26 ICE raid in San Jose?

Mr. CARR. The FCC, I believe, received either a complaint or we heard concerns about that specific radio station, and we have raised those concerns. I believe we have heard back from that radio station, and we have nothing new to share to update on that investigation.

Ms. MATSUI. OK, OK.

Mr. HUDSON. That is time.

Ms. MATSUI. Excuse me, did I lose my time?

Mr. HUDSON. Yes.

Ms. MATSUI. OK. It seems like—

Mr. HUDSON. Your time has expired.

Ms. MATSUI. All right. Thank you very much.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. GUTHRIE. Thank you. Thank you for being here.

And so, Chairman Carr, I appreciate your commitment to meeting the 800 megahertz target established in the Working Families Tax Cut.

Can you talk about how the consumer benefits that making spectrum more available for commercial use brings to hard-working Americans, but focus on how it will impact prices for hard-working Americans?

Mr. CARR. Thank you very much for the question.

Prices, according to new data just out, on the wireless side in particular, are already down over 4 percent from January 2025 alone. And part of this is our work to make more spectrum available both through auction and secondary markets. When you introduce new spectrum into a market, the data shows that it drives down prices for consumers significantly. And so both in our work in the secondary markets and our work in the upcoming auctions, pushing more spectrum into the marketplace is going to be really good for consumers.

Mr. GUTHRIE. OK, thank you.

So Commissioner Trusty, the U.S. has led the world in wireless innovation, including through unlicensed uses of spectrum since—WiFi is a great example of unlicensed. It has changed the way people connect to the internet and led to an ecosystem of new devices that we all rely upon.

So could you—how can we foster—how can we continue to foster this innovation and investment to ensure the United States continues to lead the world in wireless?

Ms. TRUSTY. Sure, thank you for the question and thank you for your leadership in spectrum policy.

Because we have the spectrum provisions in the Working Families Tax Cut Act, that gives us the foundation we need to lead the world in wireless. And so to build on that we need to maintain predictability in our spectrum policy. So to continue to have auction authority and a long-term spectrum pipeline, we need to be leading in international standards-setting bodies. We also need to maintain strong interagency coordination. And I think we need to be investing in artificial intelligence so that we can increase spectrum efficiency. And I think AI will define the future of things like 6G, AI native networks, and capabilities like integrated sensing and communications.

And to build on that, I also think we need to continue to build trusted and secure infrastructure and develop coalitions with our international partners and allies so that our preferred technologies

and standards achieve harmonization and scale. I think all of those things will position us well to lead in wireless innovation.

Mr. GUTHRIE. OK, thank you, and welcome back to the committee. I hope you are enjoying it from that side.

Ms. TRUSTY. Thank you, sir.

Mr. GUTHRIE. And I enjoyed working with my—the ranking member of this subcommittee. We still work together, Ranking Member Matsui, on spectrum policy. That has been a good, good work for us.

And so Chairman Carr, could you speak to the importance of media modernization, and why it is critical to remove outdated regulations for incumbent industries to allow them to better compete with Big Tech?

Mr. CARR. Well, one of the main concerns I have with respect to media policy is you have, on the one hand, all these individual licensed local TV stations. On the other hand, you have these national programmers: Disney, Comcast, a handful of others. And over the years, historically, we had a balance between the national programmers and the licensed local TV stations.

But recently what we have seen is those national programmers have just consolidated and amassed a massive amount of power, and we are losing that balance between the programmers and the actual local TV stations. In some cases they are becoming just a mouthpiece for programming being produced by those national programmers.

So the thing that we are trying to push the hardest on our media policies is to reempower those local TV stations to compete in this modern media marketplace.

Mr. GUTHRIE. OK, thank you. And also, Chairman Carr, space is expected to dominate the accompanying—upcoming World Radio Communications conference. I think Commissioner Gomez told me yesterday she was very—she has been very involved in the radio communications conferences.

I am deeply concerned about what China and Russia are doing in space. And that being said, our friends across the Atlantic have been making it difficult for the American companies to operate in the European market.

Chairman Carr, from your perspective, how do we posture the U.S. for success?

And do you think there is still room for partnership with our partners in Europe?

Mr. CARR. One thing I give credit to my predecessor, Chairwoman Rosenworcel—honestly, she stood up a new space bureau inside the FCC. And one thing that we are doing is really supercharging those efforts there. Right when I came in, we cleared out over half of the backlogs that had been there. We recently approved a next-generation constellation into low Earth orbit, and we did that in roughly half the time that it had taken the FCC to approve the prior updated constellation.

And so, as you point out, China wants to dominate in low Earth orbit and up and down all orbital slots—

Mr. GUTHRIE. I have about 30 seconds.

So what—in this area, what can the committee do to help? Is there a legislative need for you, or what can we do to help you?

Mr. CARR. You know, the FCC needs to continue to move faster in this space, and legislative efforts to help lock that in would be a good thing.

Mr. GUTHRIE. OK, thank you.

I have 15 seconds left, and I will yield them back.

Mr. HUDSON. I appreciate that, Chairman.

The Chair now recognizes the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Pallone, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you, Chairman Hudson.

Chairman Carr, I did want to get into the local broadcasters that you mentioned, but just as simple yes or no initially. You recently stated that the FCC is not an independent agency.

True? Yes or no.

Mr. CARR. I said the FCC is not, formally speaking, an independent agency, yes.

Mr. PALLONE. OK. But to me, that is very much contradictory to what you said in 2022 when you testified before this very subcommittee and you made it clear that Congress made the decision that the FCC is truly independent—not the President, and certainly not you—that it is an independent agency. So I think you, you know, you are kind of hedging a little bit when you say that you think it is an independent agency, because I think you have repeatedly said that it is not.

But whatever. Let me get to Commissioner Gomez.

Can you discuss the importance of the FCC's independence from political interference, if you will?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for your question.

Congress set up the FCC as an independent agency because it feared that the agency should not be subject to the whims of one person or one political party. That is why we have an independent, multimember, expert body that regulates our communications medium.

So when we declare that we are not independent, what we are doing is, A, we are not recognizing what Congress wanted when it created this independent agency, but we are also putting way too much power into one person and then doing their political whims.

Mr. PALLONE. I appreciate that, and I do think, Chairman Carr, that you don't—you know, your repeated comments do not suggest that you think it is an independent agency.

But I don't want to get into all the details because I do want to get to this local broadcaster issue which you mentioned before, because I think local broadcasters are some of the most powerful voices shaping public opinion at the local level. And the FCC has adopted and enforced ownership restrictions to ensure the needs of local communities are met, and that is why I have concerns with any further relaxation of that ownership.

And I also want to remind you that Congress set the maximum reach for entities owning TV stations at 39 percent of national television audience households, and I—only Congress can change that threshold.

So let me ask you, Chairman, do you agree that only Congress has the authority to raise the national ownership cap?

Mr. CARR. The position of the FCC consistently over the prior four Chairs, Republican and Democrats alike, has always been that the 39 percent cap is a rule that the FCC has on our code of regulations. And as a general matter, I really agree with you on the need to reinvigorate—

Mr. PALLONE. Right.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. The local broadcasters.

Mr. PALLONE. But you are saying, then, that you don't think—you think you can raise it on your own, the Commission can.

Mr. CARR. These are issues that we are looking at right now. I am just saying—

Mr. PALLONE. Well, I mean, yes or no, you believe that you can raise the cap on your own. You are saying it is a regulation, not a statute?

Mr. CARR. We are looking at that right now. I am saying that if you look at the last, you know, four FCC Chairs across Republican and Democrat, the FCC has consistently been—

Mr. PALLONE. Well, I don't think you are answering my question, but let—again, let me move on.

Commissioner Gomez, do you agree with Chairman Carr?

And, well, I guess he didn't really say anything, so let me ask you: What impact do you think any relaxation of this 39 percent would have on consumers?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

So yes, the 39 percent ownership cap is, in fact, in the statute. The Congress amended the Communications Act when it imposed the 39 percent ownership cap. So I don't think that we have the authority to waive that. It is not just a rule. Rules are how we implement the Act.

I believe consolidation is worrisome. I travel all over the country and I meet with local broadcasters, and I am always so impressed with their commitment to their communities and to serving their communities. What I fear is that this consolidation is going to enable behemoth corporate parents to take those local broadcasters and to create "efficiencies" that will, in fact, water down local news and then lead to less service for their communities, not more.

Mr. PALLONE. Well, thank you. Let me—one more question.

There has been a lot of discussion with the Chairman about the public interest or the public interest standard, but I really believe that under Chairman Carr's leadership the FCC has really not served the public interest but rather the personal or political interests of President Trump.

So let me ask you, Commissioner Gomez, has the FCC under Chair Carr's leadership been guided by the public interest standard, as you would expect, especially when it echoes President Trump's threats to take away broadcast licenses for merely criticizing him? How is that in the public interest?

Ms. GOMEZ. Fundamentally, it is important to note that we are subject to the First Amendment and to the Communications Act prohibition on censorship. We cannot use this vague and undefined and unchecked term "the public interest" in order to go after any content we don't like.

What we are seeing on this—under this administration is retaliation against speech and reporting that this administration doesn't

want in order to get coverage that this administration wants. That is not a good use of the public interest standard, and we need to define what we mean by that.

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. PALLONE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the vice chairman of the subcommittee, Mr. Allen, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. ALLEN. Thank you, Chairman Hudson, and also Chairman Carr and other members of the Commission for being here today and—anyway, thank you for your service. It is great, even under the duress that you are dealing with, but—which I really apologize for.

But anyway, Chairman Carr, last March 73 Members of Congress, including myself, sent a letter to your Commission calling for immediate action to update outdated ownership regulations. Our letter emphasized the need for rules that reflect today's competitive media landscape, where local broadcasters face unprecedented challenges competing with the unregulated Big Tech platforms.

Could you provide us with a status update on this issue? And as I understand it, with the local broadcasters, it is a matter of survival. I mean, this is a real problem. Could you update us on that?

Mr. CARR. Yes. Thank you, Congressman, for the question and for your leadership on this issue.

The FCC has a couple of active proceedings underway where we are looking at this. Again, my, you know, North Star through all this media policy is I am not interested in seeing the national programmers, Disney and Comcast, amass any more power than they already have. I think one thing that we have to try to look at, whether it is this proceeding or otherwise, is how do we create some better structural competition to them because, to your point, if you look at local news right now, it is principally being driven by local broadcasters.

We used to have thousands of local newspapers across the country. I know in your experience you are seeing them close down or at least stop physically printing by the dozen.

What I don't want to see, and I think the conversation that we should have in Congress, is if we care about local news and local reporting, how do we make sure that those local TV stations continue to be economically viable because we don't want them to go the way of so many newspapers. I don't think we would be better off as a country if we lost them.

Mr. ALLEN. And, you know, again, it is run by local folks who live in the community, who work in the community, who contribute to the community. And I don't see how being part of a bigger organization to survive, you know, the current turmoil, if you would say, in this industry and expansion in this industry is—I think it is, you know, I think it is important that we have that local influence.

You have made empowering local broadcasters a centerpiece of your agenda. One such way has been your oversight of retransmission consent fees, ensuring that they are used as Congress in-

tended—that is, by local broadcasters for a program that serves the local community.

Can you update us on your oversight of the retransmission consent regime and explain why this is so important?

Mr. CARR. Well, one issue that we are looking at is those agreements, the affiliate agreements between the local TV stations on the one hand and those national programs on the other. We are looking at lots of different ways to help empower that.

Retrans is a very complex issue. On the one hand, we are seeing declining revenues at a lot of local TV stations. At the same time, the national programmers will say they need to maintain scale themselves to continue to compete for expensive sports rights. And so we have to try to find a right balance between having the financial capability of local TV stations to invest in local news and reporting, but also making sure that they have, you know, the national sports rights that people expect and demand. So it is a complex issue, but we are looking at it.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes, yes, there is nothing worse than having the national championship and then all of a sudden you find out, oh, I can't get it on my television, yes.

But we know that in 2027 China will host the next World Radio Conference, an international conference that will set global rules for using spectrum. Under the last administration, domestic disputes between Federal agencies about how spectrum should be used sidelined the United States and allowed other countries to pick the spectrum bands for next-generation networks. As a result, the United States now trails the world on midband spectrum for wireless broadband.

What does the United States need to do to ensure it is ready for the next World Radio Conference?

How can we ensure that the United States, and not China, is driving global spectrum focus at this conference?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman. I think you are right. If you look back at past radio conferences, there was some gaps between different Federal agencies in terms of their positions. That doesn't put us on the strongest possible footing.

You know, thankfully, President Trump has been very clear to every agency that the United States is going to lead the world in next-generation technology, and that has resulted in a lot of close collaboration from the FCC, NTIA, Commerce, the White House, and hopefully, you know, we continue to make a very strong, unified position because we know China and others are going to be very unified going into that, and so we need a strong U.S. position, as well.

Mr. ALLEN. Good, great.

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. ALLEN. Yes. Thank you for your service.

And I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Soto, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. SOTO. Thank you, Chairman.

President Trump has the most corrupt administration in modern history: a \$2 billion cryptocurrency scandal, pay-to-play pardons, pardoning January 6 insurrectionists, an Epstein pedophile cover-

up, White House ballrooms that are lavish, and the Trump family getting rich off of official U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and beyond. And when the national media like CBS, ABC, and NBC cover these egregious scandals or use satire, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr tried to crush them using his power as FCC Chairman.

CBS covers the cryptocurrency corruption, pardon of the Binance founder. Then CBS is forced to install a bias monitor. Two days after the merger approval, under pressure from Carr and Trump, along with an extortion payment of \$16 million, ABC's Jimmy Kimmel uses satire to criticize Trump. Carr threatens their license. NBC's Seth Meyers uses satire to criticize Trump. Chairman Carr echoes Trump's call for Meyers' ouster.

Chairman, you have turned the FCC into Trump's attack dog to crush First Amendment rights through FCC extortion. The Chinese Communist Party would be impressed. There was a time when you passionately defended First Amendment rights. In fact, you and I tangoed over COVID and issues related to that.

So how do you justify using the FCC to censor news and satire of Trump's rampant corruption?

Mr. CARR. Broadcasters have an obligation to operate in the public interest, and in 2021—

Mr. SOTO. Is it not the public interest—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Wrote this letter right here to the FCC, asking us to take action when there was a transaction pending at the FCC involving a Spanish-language radio station in south Florida.

Mr. SOTO. Is it not in the public interest—

Mr. CARR. You talk about disinformation and pressuring the FCC—

Mr. SOTO [continuing]. For people to know about the corruption that is happening in this administration?

Mr. CARR [continuing]. And then Democrats step in and say, to win in 2022, this must stop, pressuring the FCC to block a sale because Democrats thought it would be bad for their—

Mr. SOTO. Reclaiming my time, you serve the American people.

Mr. CARR. And after that—

Mr. SOTO. What is at issue—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Go through.

Mr. SOTO [continuing]. Is blatant corruption by the Trump administration and you trying to hide it, and everybody knows it.

Commissioner Gomez, one day Chairman Carr's reign of un-American censorship will be over.

How do we restore public confidence in the FCC after this national censorship scandal?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

I think Congress can really help us here by putting guardrails on the FCC so that it cannot violate the First Amendment and censor content on broadcasters.

Mr. SOTO. And what do you think those guardrails should be?

Ms. GOMEZ. I think defining the public—what it means to serve in the public interest would be very helpful.

Mr. SOTO. Do you think highlighting corruption is in the public interest?

Ms. GOMEZ. I think the FCC should stay out of content, whether we like it or not. And that is the problem, is this administration wants to retaliate against news organizations that have the temerity to report factually about this administration.

Mr. SOTO. Well, the history books will not be kind to that.

It has been over a year since Trump took office, and we still don't have rural broadband in rural communities like mine and others. You came to my district a while back in Orlando to hear from veterans who utilize internet to help with their healthcare.

What has the effect been of the BEAD program still not being rolled out across America with regard to consumers?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, it is so important for us to be able to participate in this economy today, the digital economy, to have access to affordable broadband. And the communities that don't have that are getting further and further left behind.

And as you know, when we came we were talking about the Affordable Connectivity Program and how important that was to veterans to be able to make their meetings and their healthcare appointments without having to, in fact, travel. It saved them days of painful travel. So we need to focus on this issue so that every American can have access to affordable and accessible broadband, especially if we want to be world leaders in artificial intelligence.

Mr. SOTO. And——

Ms. GOMEZ. It is so important.

Mr. SOTO. And what happens to rural businesses, farms, ranches when they don't have access to high-speed broadband?

Ms. GOMEZ. If you don't have access to high-speed broadband, you really are at risk of being left behind. It is an imperative in today's economy, in this digital economy, to have access to broadband.

Mr. SOTO. Thanks, Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Latta, for——

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you——

Mr. HUDSON [continuing]. Five minutes for your questions.

Mr. LATTA [continuing]. Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the Commission for being with us today, Chairman Carr, Commissioner Gomez, and Commissioner Trusty, and congratulations. It is great since you have been in my office years back to follow your career. Congratulations.

Chairman Carr, to start off with the BEAD program, how much shovels in the ground were there in the Biden administration?

Mr. CARR. The BEAD program was President Biden's \$42 billion plan to connect millions of Americans to high-speed internet. And after over 1,000 days of the Biden administration implementing it, not a single shovel's worth of dirt was turned.

Now, President Trump and Secretary Lutnick and NTIA Administrator Roth have come in, and they have turned that program around, and we are finally going to be seeing dirt turning and Americans getting connected.

Mr. LATTA. So I just want to make sure I heard that correctly. Nothing happened in the Biden administration.

Let me turn to another topic I know that you and I talked about through the years, especially when we had this spectrum authority auction lapse, you know, because how far did we fall behind in this country when we didn't have that authority to sell spectrum?

And the other question I would like to ask is this, because it is always one of the things we always worry about: How much money did we lose in that timeframe from not being able to have that auction authority?

Mr. CARR. Yes, during the Biden administration the FCC's Spectrum Auction Authority lapsed for the very first time ever, and that enabled other countries, China and others, to leapfrog the United States. We fell several hundred megahertz behind them. But thankfully, this Congress came together, President Trump came together and passed a Working Families Tax Cut that created a strong pipeline of 800 megahertz.

And again, every time you bring spectrum online, that drives down prices for consumers, and so that is what we are doing right now.

Mr. LATTA. So if I understood that correctly, it was during the Biden administration that authority lapsed.

Let me ask you another question, because this just came in. I know that we talked about this 3 years, and I worked on legislation on robocalls and trying to protect the public out there. What is that—and I know that in reading your testimony that the Commission wants to move forward and make sure that we protect people out there from these robocalls that people are getting.

Mr. CARR. Well, thank you.

Robocalls, obviously, are our number-one consumer complaint. And right now we are building on the long-term bipartisan work of the agency on this. One thing we are doing is historically the FCC would focus on a very small number of robocalls that generated a lot of calls, and they would fine them hundreds of millions of dollars, but those fines would largely go uncollected. And what we are doing now is we are picking up on something we did in the last administration, which is to kick providers out of our robocall mitigation database if they are not doing enough to fight illegal robocalls, and that effectively cuts them off from the U.S. telephone network.

And more generally, we are going at every single portion of the life cycle of illegal robocalls, and making it harder for the bad actors to get their calls through, including we are looking particularly at foreign-originated illegal robocalls.

Mr. LATTA. Well, I know the American public out there is going to appreciate your work on that, because I know I just got a call the other day from a constituent that had problems with robocalls coming into their business.

Commissioner Trusty, you know where I am from and what our—my area looks like. And there's areas out there, of course, that we don't have broadband. And I know I worked years back making sure that we had accurate maps before we would spend money to make sure that dollars were spent. In your testimony you talk about some of the things you are really focusing on, and one of the things I think is really important you talk about is when we are talking about rural healthcare and telehealth. And I know

when I am in my rural hospitals, they can't afford to have a lot of different programs you might see or docs doing certain procedures, or especially on the mental health side.

Could you just elaborate a little bit on the mental health side and the telehealth side?

Ms. TRUSTY. Absolutely. Thank you so much for the question.

As you know, the rural healthcare program ensures that rural patients have access to modern quality healthcare, including telehealth. And the FCC has made some process improvements to improve access to this essential program by extending the application deadline, by making sure funding aligns with demands. And we have been able to roll over unused funds for this year—or for 2025—to ensure that we increase access to this important service.

I think as part of the USF congressional working group there is another opportunity to explore additional reforms that can be made to this program to ensure that Americans in rural communities across the country have access to the quality care that they need.

Mr. LATTA. Well, thank you.

If I could just return to you, Commissioner Carr, just real quickly, because we had discussions when we talked about 4G, 5G, 6G, and I would always ask this question: Are we winning the race? And you know, who is our competitor out there?

We got to win this race. So are we winning this race out there when we talk about 6G?

Mr. CARR. We are. We had fallen behind, in my view, during the Biden years, and now we have hit the accelerator and we are going to be leading the world once again in next generation technology.

Mr. LATTA. Thank you very much.

My time has expired, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the Representative of New York, Ms. Clarke, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Ms. CLARKE. Good morning, and thank you, Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, for convening this hearing. Given the actions of the FCC under Chairman Carr, it is long overdue.

Less than 1 year into his tenure, the FCC under Chairman Carr has given this committee many worthy avenues of exploration and oversight, most of which appear to stem from his new role as an obsequious partisan fulfilling President Trump's desire to exact revenge on his perceived enemies and line the pockets of the oligarch class.

While appearing before this committee less than 4 years ago under the Biden administration, then-Commissioner Carr rightly acknowledged the independence of the FCC, free from executive branch interference, but recently made clear that under the Trump administration that independence is gone. While this may seem like a shocking about-face, it shouldn't be that surprising, given Mr. Carr's role as author of the horrific Project 2025 manifesto as well as the frankly bizarre choice to wear a golden lapel pin bearing President Trump's face.

The weaponization of the FCC under Chairman Carr is not just frustrating but dangerous, dangerous for the Nation and the ideals upon which it was founded. Individuals' freedom of speech and a press corps free from political intimidation are vital to a democ-

racy. It is what also allows informed citizens to speak their minds without fear of government reprisal and serves as an important check on those in power. Unfortunately, these ideals are lost under this iteration of the FCC, which appears bound to the whims of a President intent on punishing those who report accurately on his unsettling behavior.

Because my time is limited, I can't possibly list every example of the weaponization of the FCC in the last year, but a few that come to mind include reinstating complaints against news organizations that were critical of Trump during the election, while failing to reinstate a petition filed against the President's media outlet of choice, Fox; ordering baseless investigations into NPR and PBS; using mergers to extract political revenge; and more, such as withholding approval of the Paramount-Skydance merger until Trump's personal lawsuit was settled with financial payment; launching a ridiculous investigation into KCBS in San Jose for merely reporting on ICE activity in their own community; threatening to unilaterally alter national media ownership limits, which would reduce diversity in media and further endanger local news; overtly partisan reinterpretations of the FCC's public interest standard and news distortion policies to enact a regime of censorship; and most notably the overt threatening of licenses of broadcasters for carrying the Jimmy Kimmel Live show.

To the last point, Senator Cruz, who I rarely agree with, aptly described Chairman Carr's threats as akin to something out of a mafia movie. And let me just say I don't see any Michael Corleones in this room today. Only Alfredo.

So my question is to Commissioner Gomez. For nearly 90 years, the FCC has functioned as an independent agency to insulate communications policy from political pressure.

Can you explain why the FCC's independence is essential to its credibility and effectiveness, and what potential risks arise as that independence is eroded?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

You know, when Congress created our predecessor, the Federal Radio Commission, it considered putting the Commission under the Department of Commerce. And Herbert Hoover at the time said it was a terrible idea because it was dangerous to have the regulator of the most important communications medium at the time being overseen by a single person, and so that is why it created an independent agency.

It is important to have an independent agency because we must be seen as an expert body that makes decisions based on that expertise and not based on the political whims of one administration.

Ms. CLARKE. Commissioner Gomez, how do FCC media ownership caps support diversity of viewpoints and locally focused news?

And what do communities risk losing if these limits are weakened?

Ms. GOMEZ. Our core principles when we talk about the public interest in local broadcasting are localism, diversity of viewpoints, and competition. The caps ensure that we have multiple voices in every market. That is why we have them. We want to ensure that we have that. If we lose those caps, what we are going to lose is

that diversity of viewpoints, and we risk having one voice funneling all the information to our voters.

Ms. CLARKE. With that I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentlelady. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Bilirakis, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you very much. My questions are for Chairman Carr.

In addition to serving on the Energy and Commerce Committee, I am a member of the Select Committee on China. Under that role I recently led a letter with Chairman Moolenaar to your office regarding specific concerns about Chinese fiber technology entering our country and the security concerns it brings to the United States.

The FCC and Congress has already done a great job to protect our networks from these threats, but the concern remains. Just last week the Financial Times reported a new China-backed hack of congressional staff email accounts.

Can you outline, Mr. Chairman, what actions you are continuing to take to identify and address adversarial threats to U.S. telecommunications infrastructure?

And can you confirm that you will continue—again, have all the necessary tools at your disposal to adequately address these concerns without additional congressional approvals?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman, for the question, for your leadership on this important issue.

So one of the very first things I did as Chair was to stand up within the FCC a new Council on National Security that brings together all of our bureaus and offices and their expertise to bear on this issue because China and other foreign actors are constantly poking and prodding and finding—looking for ways into our communications network.

We have taken actions on what we call bad labs to try to kick out equipment authorization bodies that aren't trustworthy. We have taken action to implement the Secure Equipment Act, and with cybersecurity in particular we worked directly with carriers to ensure that they are taking renewed actions to accelerate the patching of vulnerable equipment, updating and reviewing their access controls, disabling unnecessary outbound connections.

And the key to this is we have to be very, very nimble and make sure that carriers and our country's national security expertise, including CISA and DHS, are very closely collaborating because you need very quick reactions, given the types of threats we are seeing.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good. Again, a question for the Chairman.

In your written testimony you devote a section to the deregulatory actions the FCC has engaged in under your leadership. This includes removal of over 1,100 rules and regulations. I applaud these actions, especially as this committee is working on its own permitting reform package to streamline the process.

Beyond the baseline number of regulations removed, is there any way to quantify how much time and/or money is saved by these actions?

How would you describe these changes to the typical American taxpayer and internet user? I think that is very important.

Mr. CARR. We——

Mr. BILIRAKIS. If you could respond, I would appreciate it.

Mr. CARR. Yes, thank you, Congressman. The easiest way to put it is that it historically just—it costs too much and it takes too long to build out internet infrastructure in this country. And that means communities that are on the edge case of new or additional or better service can get left behind. And so we are working hard at the FCC on permitting reform and cutting red tape, and that is going to be key to making sure that we keep driving down prices for Americans.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good. For the last several weeks the news has been inundated with the discovery of mass amounts of fraud within our Federal programs. What are the safeguards at the FCC to help guard against fraud?

And in light of what is happening with the improper payments within other agencies, is this something you are considering taking a look at and updating?

Mr. CARR. We are in the midst of continuing to reinvigorate our work to detect and root out waste, fraud, and abuse. Just recently we took action, for instance, with respect to California. California had a State Lifeline program that had decided that they were going to stop sharing relevant information with certain Federal agencies, and that opened the door to potential waste, fraud, and abuse. So we revoked California's ability to opt out of that program, and now we are putting everybody through this national database.

We are also finalizing some work right now on some additional steps that we can take with respect to our Lifeline program to make sure that those benefits are flowing only to those Americans that Congress intended them to.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Very good. Thank you very much.

And now I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Peters, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this important oversight hearing.

In 2021 Congress voted to invest a total of \$65 billion in the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment program, or BEAD, to advance universal broadband access, with over \$1.8 billion reserved for my home State of California. By the end of the Biden administration, State deployment offices had made progress through the long process requirements, guidelines, and mandated studies included in law. They made awards to grantees who were committed to building fiber lines to hard-to-reach areas and strengthening connectivity in underserved areas.

However, lamentably, there were no shovels in the ground, and I was one of the people who joined Republicans to criticize how long it had taken for that to happen and to be an advocate for permanent reform in this field and in others. But by the beginning of 2025, States were ready to build their—begin their build-outs, and the Trump administration decided to issue new regulations which halted any progress. So we are back where we started. We are no better off, and progress is still stalled today as the administration holds the BEAD program's funding hostage.

The Federal Communications Commission is guided by the principle that all Americans should have access to communications services. The Trump administration's pause on BEAD funding broadband build-out for over a year goes directly against this principle and continues the very things I joined Republicans to be critical of under the Biden administration.

Ms. Gomez, how did delays in broadband deployment affect the FCC's abilities to meet its goal of making affordable connectivity accessible to all Americans?

And how can we ensure that people have the skills to take advantage of broadband once it is deployed?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

We want to get broadband to every community everywhere as soon as possible because we really risk leaving people further and further behind. And I am afraid that we will go from having a digital divide to a digital chasm if we don't do that.

But I am glad that you raise the totality of what Congress did with the Broadband Equity and Access program, because one thing we cannot ignore is that we need affordability and we need people to have the digital skills in order to take advantage of broadband that will give them access to this digital economy. And I am afraid that this administration has completely lost its focus on that, and that is why I say I am afraid that, if we don't ensure that these networks are sustainable but making sure that everyone can use them and afford them, we are going to be building bridges to nowhere.

Mr. PETERS. Right. Well, I share that concern, and thank you. And I think it is critical that we invest in and continue to improve programs like the Universal Service Fund to support affordable rates in underserved areas and rural access to hard-to-reach areas.

And again, when I first came to Congress we were all talking about rural broadband and how important that was. I think the pandemic showed us that the digital divide exists even in wealthy neighborhoods like the ones that I serve, and I think we should get at it.

Along the lines of permanent reform, last year I joined with my colleagues, Representatives Joyce and Landman, to introduce the bipartisan Broadband and Telecommunications Rail Act. We have heard that when broadband companies try to build out communications infrastructure across railroad crossings, the costs and approval times skyrocket. To streamline the deployment process between broadband providers and railroad carriers, the bill would implement firm timelines, conflict resolution processes, and fee scales to help the FCC move faster in support of the public interest. It would outline the responsibility of each party and give the FCC authority where it previously had none.

Commissioner Gomez, how would granting the FCC authority over this process speed up access to fast, reliable, and affordable connectivity?

And are there other areas in broadband deployment that the FCC does not currently but should have jurisdiction?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question, and I am very supportive of streamlining approvals and particularly of your bill's focus on making sure that the costs that are being recovered are

actually the costs of providing those approvals, and that, I think, is very important.

So I think it is very helpful when Congress gives us instructions on what it is that we are supposed to do, particularly in the area where we are, in fact, acting to either preempt local regulations or tell others what we think that they should be doing. So I look forward to working with you in the future on this.

Mr. PETERS. Great. Maybe, Commissioner Trusty, any other areas in broadband deployment where the FCC needs jurisdiction, we need to give you jurisdiction?

Ms. TRUSTY. Well, thank you for the question and thank you for your work on this bipartisan legislation.

The Commission is working on a number of fronts to remove regulatory barriers that impede the deployment of broadband, whether it is pole attachments, environmental or historic reviews, and expanding access to rights-of-way. I think all of these things will help us accelerate access to connectivity.

Mr. PETERS. Well, keep us posted on that.

I am out of time, and I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the Representative from Georgia, Representative Carter, for 5 minutes for your questions.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank all of you for being here.

Chairman Carr, there has been a lot of ink here recently in the past few months or so regarding the streaming market and competition, and there has been a lot of confusion about regulatory jurisdiction in this space. Do you care to give us a view on the current landscape?

Mr. CARR. Well, streaming is something that we stay apprised of at the FCC. It is adjacent to markets that we directly regulate, and it is intertwined. And I think there is—has been concern increasingly expressed recently about consolidation in the streaming market, and potentially further consolidation in the streaming market that could potentially harm consumers.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Great. Thank you, Chairman Carr, and I am going to jump into—straight into some of my next inquiry regarding broadband permitting reform. And as you know, I have introduced the American Broadband Deployment Act of 2025 to help cut red tape and to speed broadband build-out and to close the digital divide across America, which has been passed on to the full committee and awaits further consideration.

Chairman Carr, I appreciate your support for my legislation in your testimony, and I want to ask you, why is it important for Congress to pass my legislation codifying your reforms?

And what kinds of steps is the FCC exploring to address State and local barriers to fixed and mobile broadband deployment?

Mr. CARR. Well, thank you, Congressman, for your leadership on permitting reform. I had the chance to visit with you in Georgia and actually splice fiber at an active build. And as we saw there and other places around the country, we have to make sure—that is a tough job, it is a difficult job, but we shouldn't have red tape standing in the way. And I continue to think one of the most im-

portant things that can happen is to pass that package of permitting reform bills to make sure that we keep turning dirt.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. I want to highlight another permitting national security issue regarding undersea cables. This is something that I have taken an interest in because it is critical broadband infrastructure that carries over 95 percent of international data traffic. I have got a bill that is called the Undersea Cables Protection Act, which will eliminate the need for redundant, 5-year special use permits in national marine sanctuaries to streamline duplicate permitting that is significantly slowing down the deployment of cables.

Chairman Carr, can you explain why slow-rolling subsea cable infrastructure is a threat to national security?

Mr. CARR. Well, thank you, Congressman, for working on this.

Most consumers probably don't realize it, but, to your view, over 95 percent of all internet traffic ultimately travels over undersea cable. So we are working at the FCC right now to incentivize secure investment, new undersea cables, cybersecurity requirements for some of the technology that is in there, and I think your legislation would go a long way to promoting greater, securer build-out of that critical infrastructure.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. And a lot of this information is in financial markets as well, isn't it?

Mr. CARR. That is right.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Commissioner Trusty, I want to ask you, the Commission recently issued a notice of proposed rule-making on subsea cables that also addressed the importance of speeding the deployment of cables.

Can you talk a little bit about how the FCC plans to expedite the permitting and licensing process generally and why facilitating the deployment of cables is so important?

Ms. TRUSTY. Yes, absolutely, and thank you for your leadership on this issue.

So last year, in August, the FCC adopted a proceeding where we streamlined the licensing and permitting processes for undersea cables. We updated outdated rules, we established faster processing timelines for eligible applicants, and we cut unnecessary administrative steps or disclosures. And that helps to promote the fast and efficient deployment of undersea cables, which is essential for our economic and national security.

This positions us to be able to promote more U.S.-led cable projects, to diversify our subsea traffic routes so in the event of sabotage or compromise there is no single point of failure, and it means we can strengthen our disaster recovery and emergency response plans. So it really helps with redundancy in this critical infrastructure.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. And it would be naive of us to think that this wouldn't be used as a weapon at some point.

Ms. TRUSTY. That is right.

Mr. CARTER OF GEORGIA. Well, thank you, Chairman Carr and Commissioner Trusty. I am going to do the chairman a favor and give him back almost a minute.

And I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. I appreciate that.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from California, Mr. Ruiz, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. RUIZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Look, I want to begin by addressing the troublesome direction Chairman Carr has taken the FCC. He is a tool of President Trump's Project 2025 agenda to suppress freedom of speech and those who criticize Trump, and to forcefully favor Trump's billionaire friends and supporters in order to control the content.

One: Publicly criticizing Jimmy Kimmel Live over their content criticizing Trump, leading ABC and some affiliates to pull the show out of fear of a Department of Justice lawsuit and threats of pulling their license.

Two: Reopened complaints against ABC, CBS, and NBC affiliates for alleged "news distortion" while ignoring similar complaints against other networks that support President Trump.

Three: Linked investigations to license reviews and looked into platforms like YouTube and Comcast, NBC Universal, sending a message that what companies say or do could be closely watched, overly scrutinized by the FCC.

Oh, and finally, for overseeing and facilitating media consolidation, specifically the proposed Nexstar-TEGNA merger, which is owned by one of Trump's besties and supporters, and would give one company unprecedented reach to over 80 percent of households in America, controlling the content, threatening competition, weakening local journalism, and driving up costs for consumers.

The Trump administration does not care about everyday Americans. They care about power, about control, and their billionaire friends. They care about making the rich richer and pushing their own agendas to suppress criticism of Trump and limit what Americans see on TV to control the message and push his propaganda. That is not America, and that shouldn't be happening in America. Americans deserve an FCC that protects free expression and ensures all communities have access to diverse content.

Commissioner Gomez, what concerns do you have on the Nexstar-TEGNA merger and Chairman Carr raising the national audience cap from 39 to 54.5 percent illegally on a special deal to benefit Trump's friends?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question, Congressman.

What we fundamentally want is we want local communities to get information about their local communities. And what happens when we have too much consolidation by these national corporations that own these local broadcasters is we lose the diversity of voices and we lose that local news content that we have. Couple that with the defunding of public media, and we are also losing even more voices in our local communities.

Now, the 39 percent ownership cap is in the statute. I don't think we can waive it. I think it would take an act of Congress in order to allow us to be able to grant a transaction of this size because of the fact that not only is the 39 percent cap in the statute, it is also—we were forbidden from forbearing from that cap.

Mr. RUIZ. Thank you. Thank you. The Trump administration has failed to ease the financial burden on everyday Americans. Their actions have raised costs. Specifically, they opposed several Federal initiatives, including the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment

Program, State Broadband Price Regulation, and the Universal Service Fund, all of which would raise costs.

One of these programs, the USF, is crucial for ensuring that communities in the Coachella, San Jacinto, and Imperial Valleys have access to reliable and affordable broadband and telephone services. Through programs like Lifeline, USF provides direct discounts to low-income households, helping students, agricultural workers, and families stay connected while also supporting broadband deployment in rural and underserved areas where service would otherwise be too costly. USF alone helps expand essential services and promotes more affordable and competitive broadband options for residents.

Commissioner Trusty, in your confirmation you highlighted your commitment to “considering adjustments to USF programs to better target resources to underserved communities.”

Do you still maintain that commitment?

Ms. TRUSTY. Yes, I do.

Mr. RUIZ. Thank you. And would you commit to working with Members of Congress before the FCC releases any rulemaking or public notices on changes to USF programs?

Ms. TRUSTY. I am always happy to work with Congress.

Mr. RUIZ. Will you commit to work before any changes are made?

Ms. TRUSTY. I am always happy to commit to work to Congress.

Mr. RUIZ. I will take that as yes, and I am going to take your word for it.

Ms. TRUSTY. I am always happy to work with Congress.

Mr. RUIZ. Without these programs, households face barriers to education, telehealth, and emergency communications, leaving them disconnected from opportunities and civic life. We cannot discuss fairness and media oversight without addressing the systemic barriers that leave communities behind, and I am tired of seeing time and time again how the Trump administration hurts Americans and make their everyday lives more costly. It is time to hold them accountable.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from South Carolina, Representative Fry, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. FRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for the witnesses for being here. Chairman Carr, Commissioners, I really appreciate the opportunity to have this hearing today.

Commissioner Trusty, I understand that you had recently attended a conference in Dubai, and I am curious your thoughts on that conference, just briefly, and what we need to do to ensure that the U.S. has a more unified position going into the conference in 2027. It seems critically important, given the conference is being held in China, of all places.

Ms. TRUSTY. Yes, thank you so much for the question.

So, as you know, the WRC 2023 was held in Dubai, and the unfortunate issue for the United States was that we didn’t have auction authority, we didn’t have a long-term spectrum pipeline, and we didn’t have a unified strategy. And so we were sidelined from very important discussions, which meant that we couldn’t emerge from that conference with wins.

Now, thanks to leadership from members of this subcommittee, we have auction authority, we have a long-term spectrum pipeline, and I think that gives us a foundation to develop a unified strategy where we can focus on key U.S. interests, working with our international allies in advance of WRC 2027, to emerge from this conference with wins.

Mr. FRY. Thank you for that.

Obviously, you know, during the first Trump administration they unlocked additional 6 gigahertz of bandwidth. In 2020, when the first Trump administration made that available, nearly 70 countries followed our lead. Now China is trying to undermine those efforts in Europe, and we are hearing good things, obviously, now out of the Trump administration defending that abroad.

But have you talked—you have talked about the importance of WiFi to the American innovation. Can you explain why it is pivotal that America lead on WiFi?

Ms. TRUSTY. Absolutely. So as I mentioned a little bit earlier, I have been a proponent of an all-of-the-above approach to spectrum policy, where we are accommodating a variety of users, use cases, and technologies. When you look at things like CBRS, you know, the United States has long been a leader in innovative uses of spectrum, and CBRS is a model for that. It accommodates the military, transportation, logistics, tracking, schools, hospitals, and much more.

And so my job at the FCC is to ensure spectrum is being put to its highest and best use. But given all of the use cases, I think it emphasizes the meaningful benefit of CBRS and unlicensed spectrum.

Mr. FRY. Thank you so much for that.

Commissioner Gomez, I appreciated your comments earlier about, I think, the—that—maybe the mission, in your opinion, of the FCC has shifted, that you are not supposed to police speech, that you are drifting from the mission. Those are some of the comments that I think you made. But I am curious.

In 2023 the Senate Majority Leader and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries sent a letter to Fox News regarding their coverage of the 2020 election, pressuring private news outlet owners to order specific shows and hosts to change their political coverage and issue compelled, on-air statements solely because they disagreed with that coverage.

Although you were not on the Commission at the time, based on your opening statements, do you condemn those attempts by Democrats to censor free speech and journalism?

Ms. GOMEZ. The First Amendment prohibits government interference in free speech. And so, in my view, the FCC should not be engaged in any activities that lead to either policing, bias, or pressuring newsrooms into how to report the news. So we should not be regulating content.

Mr. FRY. So——

Ms. GOMEZ. At all.

Mr. FRY [continuing]. It would be fair to say that you would disagree with Chuck Schumer and Hakeem Jeffries' letter to Fox News?

Ms. GOMEZ. I think that to the extent any actions to pressure news by the Government has led to the abuses that you are seeing under this administration, we should reconsider it.

Mr. FRY. Thank you for that. I am glad to hear you that you disagree with that.

Would you also—in 2023, progressive activists petitioned the FCC to deny the renewal of a WTXF-TV's broadcast license, Fox 29 out of Philadelphia, arguing that Fox's—Fox News' 2020 election coverage rendered the licensee unfit for the public interest and character standards. The FCC issued a public notice, treated the matter as a permit, but disclosed proceeding and formally invited public comment on whether the Fox 29 license should be renewed. It was only after the 2024 election that the Commission dismissed the petition and renewed that license.

Commissioner Gomez, during that period when the petition was pending and the FCC was actively taking comments on whether Fox 29's license should be renewed based on coverage, did you issue any public statement condemning the use of the public interest and character standards to attack the station's license over election-related speech?

Ms. GOMEZ. I am so glad you raised the issue of the Fox petition to deny by an outside party, because it gives me the opportunity to talk to you about what is different today. That was a petition to deny a license renewal, and it was treated like other petitions to renew licenses.

In this case, what we are seeing is the FCC using complaints by a partisan group in order to police content and in order to harass and in order to affect how these stations are actually giving us the news, and that is light years different.

What you didn't see under the last administration was the last administration investigating news outlets for the content of their broadcasts. You didn't see them using the public comment cycle in order to ask them, did a station violate any FCC rules? That is not what we do.

Mr. FRY. No, they just did that—

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. FRY. They just did that directly for—

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. FRY. To say that they did not engage in—

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

I gave a lot of extra time for the witness to answer, but we will now recognize the Representative from Michigan, Representative Dingell, for 5 minutes for her questions.

Mrs. DINGELL. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the Commissioners for being here today.

This committee has a very serious responsibility to conduct oversight of the FCC. And while we made a lot of progress under the last administration, I am deeply concerned that under this administration that the FCC is moving in the wrong direction. I am going to associate myself with the previous comments by my Democratic colleagues and move to some areas that I am very deeply concerned about that are impacting people's lives.

As vehicles become increasingly connected and reliant on wireless communications, we have a responsibility to ensure these tech-

nologies are not weaponized to harm people, especially survivors of domestic violence. Survivors have reported that their abusers have used connected vehicle services to track their movements, stalk them in real time, or remotely disable their vehicles. Yet today there is no clear, consistent, or confidential process for survivors to cut off an abuser's access to their vehicle services.

In 2024 I sent a letter to the FCC urging it to take proactive steps to address the threat of domestic abusers exploiting connectivity tools in vehicles to harass and intimidate their partners. While I worked with the FCC on this issue, the lack of a clear, survivor-centered process is why I introduced the bipartisan Safe Vehicle Access for Survivors Act with Congressman Dan Crenshaw. The bill is designed to create a secure pathway for survivors to disable connected vehicle access tied to wireless-enabled vehicle technologies, while providing clarity for automakers and service providers.

Commissioner Gomez, From the FCC's perspective, how serious is the risk of these wireless-enabled vehicle technologies can be misused to facilitate stalking, coercive control, or other forms of abuse?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you so much for that question, and thank you for your leadership on this issue. It is so important to be able to protect survivors of domestic abuse.

As you know, we took action in the previous administration to require companies to sever the cell phone accounts of victims of domestic abuse, and also to not allow information in the abuser's bill to be given about the victims. And that is so important for their safety. So what you are doing is you are promoting now that we do this with vehicles.

We sought comment on that issue, but I would welcome working with you and some guidance from—

Mrs. DINGELL. OK, I am going to ask you a brief question because I want to get to another issue.

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes.

Mrs. DINGELL. But given the FCC's jurisdiction over wireless services, does the FCC currently have the authority to address these harms?

Are there limits to your authority without congressional action?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

I do believe we have authority to address them. It is always helpful when it is outlined in the statute directly.

Mrs. DINGELL. I would encourage the FCC to please act, and we will come back with congressional and try to get that done too.

Chairman Carr, I want to talk about broadband build-out failures affecting people not only in my district but across the country. Bridgewater Township is in my district, but like so many places across the country they were promised broadband service through the FCC's Rural Digital Opportunity Fund, also known as RDOF. We are now in—they were promised, by the way—my community was promised service by the end of 2024, and we are now in 2026 and this particular community only has 32 percent of the—has—have been given that access.

Let me be clear. This isn't just a failure by one company, which I have written, but it is a failure of FCC oversight. The FCC is re-

sponsible for ensuring that taxpayers' dollars is dedicated to broadband build-out, and the money that is there is used as intended, and that the communities actually receive the broadband service they were promised. Instead, communities across the country are being left behind without reliable internet for school, work, or healthcare.

Chairman Carr, what concrete enforcement actions is the FCC taking to hold those vendors that are being given contracts for its RDOF obligations?

How are you making sure that communities like mine are not punished for losing access to other Federal broadband build-out programs because of companies' false promises and FCC enforcement inaction?

Mr. CARR. Yes, thank you, Congresswoman, for the question and your advocacy on this.

It is very important that the FCC take enforcement action in those types of cases, and I can assure you that we have a number of enforcement matters going. If you made a promise to a community to deliver, then the FCC needs to hold you accountable to that.

We have also been working to make sure that NTIA and Commerce, as these BEAD dollars come online, if there is opportunities to pick up communities through that, we should collaborate on that. But my goal is the same as yours, is people should get the broadband that they were promised.

Mrs. DINGELL. Well, I hope the FCC—

Mr. HUDSON. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mrs. DINGELL. I know, but I just—I know you will look at Bridgewater now, but let's look at all those communities. You are 2 years behind. Thank you.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you. For what purpose does the gentleman from South Carolina seek recognition?

Mr. FRY. I have a unanimous consent request.

Mr. HUDSON. You can state the request.

Mr. FRY. To add an article into the record titled "Democrats Want Feds To Block Miami Latinos From Hearing Conservative Radio."

Mr. HUDSON. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HUDSON. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Griffith, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I apologize to our witnesses today that I had a markup in another committee that I had to be at, so I have got an update on what is going on.

Chairman Carr, I represent a lot of small jails that are concerned with the cost of operating a phone system for the inmates, which is a tough balance. I understand the need for prisoners, particularly inmates awaiting trial, to have reasonable communication rates, and I get that.

But can you briefly talk about the useful—and all of your standards and what you have been doing to try to make sure that smaller jails in rural areas, et cetera, have the ability to meet that balance, to be able to provide it? Because some of my jails have talked about not allowing them, you know, any communication because

they can't afford the equipment to make sure that the calls are made in a safe manner and in a proper manner.

And as a former criminal defense attorney, I am concerned because I don't want to have to go to the—if I were to return to that practice of law, I wouldn't want to have to go to the jail every time I needed to talk to one of them, one of my clients.

Mr. CARR. Yes. Well, thank you, Congressman, for your work on this, and this is an issue that is very important. It is very complex.

As you note, on the one hand we want to make sure that incarcerated individuals and their families can continue to communicate. At the same time we have an obligation to jails and the broader community to make sure those communications take place with technology that ensures safety.

The FCC over the years has tried to strike the right balance, and it has been difficult. There has been at least six different FCC actions, I think four different court cases or challenges. Congress came together in the Martha Wright Reid Act and gave us additional authority, and the FCC recently revised some of the rates. The rates are higher than the rates that were initially set the first go-round by the Biden administration, they are—sorry, they are lower than the rates initially set by the Biden administration, they are higher than the rates the Biden administration set at the end.

But to your point, what we were seeing with those last round of Biden rates is that they were too low in some circumstances, that inmates were getting denied calling services because the jail couldn't afford it or they couldn't afford the technology to make sure the communications were safe.

So it is a complex issue with really well-intentioned people on all sides of this, and we have a proceeding right now to see if we can't, you know, once and for all strike the right balance here.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Thank you. And as I said before, I have a fairly rural district. It is pretty large, got some mountains in the way of some of this stuff. And so we have had some success, and some of my folks really like Starlink. But we need competition in order to—competition is always good for bringing down prices. What is the FCC doing to try to promote additional providers in that space?

And what are your goals on reforming the satellite licensing and so-called EarthLink connections?

Mr. CARR. Yes, thank you, Congressman.

One thing that we are doing is taking a technology-neutral approach. There's many, many portions of this country where a high-speed fiber connection makes sense. But we have to be open-minded where cost per location exceeds a certain point, in which case you need to then look at other technologies like fixed wireless, like LEO systems, and that is what we are doing. We are making sure people can compete on a level playing field.

Mr. GRIFFITH. And I appreciate that because there are some areas of my district where there is one house, two houses, maybe three houses up a holler, and it would cost us a minimum of 100, maybe as much as \$200,000 just to get fiber to those couple of houses, and there is no way you would ever recoup the costs. So I appreciate that.

I appreciate also that the Commission has opened a docket to tighten foreign ownership standards for FCC licenses. Could you

explain the difficulty in sorting out increasingly complex ownership structures sometimes used by licensees?

Mr. CARR. Yes, we have rules and regulations on the books to try to make sure that we can process that. We obviously want investment in this country, but we need to make sure that there are security checks in place, and we have been taking a number of actions, again, to try to strike that right balance.

Mr. GRIFFITH. I appreciate that. I will tell you, my team thought we ought to have a little bit of fun, so I was requested to ask—and I have some questions we have to put for the record, but you don't have enough time to answer them with what I have left.

But I was requested to ask, which one was your favorite in eliminating FCC regulations?

Did you prefer or have more fun eliminating regulations on phone booths or telegraph lines?

Mr. CARR. It is funny, I was going to—before you said it, I was going to say telegraph. Yes, we had some—so much dead wood in our regulations that there were still rules that tied back to telegraph service, and I think that was a good one to get rid of.

Mr. GRIFFITH. Yes, I agree, and that is why sometimes you have to take a look at everything and eliminate those things that are no longer appropriate.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Excuse me, Madam Chairman.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK [presiding]. The Chair now recognizes Ms. Barragán for her 5 minutes of questions.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you.

Commissioner Gomez, I would like to start with you and follow up to that last interaction. The Chairman said that families should be able to communicate with their families when they are in prison. Wasn't there an effort to raise cost or the caps for prisoners to be able to make calls to their families to make it—which could lead to them costing more, making it more expensive to communicate with family?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes. Congress, in the Martha Wright Reid Act, directed the FCC to lower the cost of the IPCS, which is the prison services payphone and video calls, to make sure that they were just and reasonable and that they fairly compensated these providers.

This administration—and the last administration did that, we substantially reduced the cost of the calls. We had three mandatory data collections for—to get the correct data so that we could determine whether the rates were just and reasonable. This administration reversed what we did and said, “Well, we don't have enough data, so we are going to give the payphone providers everything they want.”

And the problem with that is what the payphone providers are doing is they are providing to these prisons and jails services that are not related to the cost of making those calls. We are forcing families of incarcerated people to pay to provide search warrant processing, to transcribe and convert into digital format, to support litigation and investigations, to aid in investigations, and to provide for skilled investigators. That has nothing to do with the making of these calls. But this administration decided that they would

provide that because we don't have enough data after three mandatory data collections.

So we are forcing families to pay for these big costs because the providers are monopoly providers that provide these services for free to these prisons and to these jails on the backs of these families.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. So these families are paying more to communicate with their—

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, they are. Their costs have gone up.

Ms. BARRAGÁN [continuing]. Their family members. Thank you.

Commissioner Carr, you have said that you think the agency should focus on information that consumers want and need. Is that accurate?

Mr. CARR. Yes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. And you have also said they should have information so they can make an informed decision. Is that accurate?

Mr. CARR. Yes. That is right.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK. I want to show you one of these. You know what this looks—you know what this is, I am sure, right? A nutrition label, the broadband label. OK, one of the pieces of this label is an early termination fee on whether there is one or not. Do you see? Have you—it is down here. I don't know if you could see it from where you are at, but certainly you must be familiar with that, correct?

Mr. CARR. Yes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK. Do you believe that consumers should know if there is going to be an early termination fee on a plan that they are signing up for?

Mr. CARR. What we are focused on is making sure that consumers have clear, concise—

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Do you think that a consumer should know that there is going to be a cancellation fee? It is very simple.

Mr. CARR. This is an issue that we are looking at right now. What we want to reach is a point at which consumers have all of the information.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. You don't have an opinion on whether consumers should know if there is going to be an early termination fee? That is shocking, Mr. Carr, Commissioner Carr, and let me tell you why. This company too has an early termination fee, up to \$750 depending on the device and the contract. So to have the Chair of the committee—of this agency not have an opinion on whether consumers should have informed—

Mr. CARR. With respect to—

Ms. BARRAGÁN [continuing]. Information on a cancellation—

Mr. CARR. The FCC has an active—

Ms. BARRAGÁN. You just confirmed to me—

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Proceeding underway right now—

Ms. BARRAGÁN. I am not—there is no question pending, sir.

Mr. CARR [continuing]. Questions about this.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. You—there is no question pending. You just told me the consumer should have the information to make an informed decision. I can tell you in my congressional district, where the people are working class and they are low income, they are going to want to know if there is an early termination fee. And they are cer-

tainly going to want to know if there is a \$750 early termination fee.

So Commissioner Gomez, I am going to turn to you. Do you think consumers should be able to know if there is an early termination fee on their plan?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, I do.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. And isn't there a proposal now to eliminate that requirement that would read to consumers whether there is an early termination fee?

Ms. GOMEZ. There—yes. What it would do is obfuscate the fees by making—by pulling them all up into one category.

Now, I believe that companies, carriers should compete on price and quality, not on being able to hide information from their consumers.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. OK. And I now want to turn to these same labels. There's companies that go out and they market to consumers in Spanish language. And then these customers come in and sign up for a service. Should those consumers be able to get this information in their language that they were marketed in?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes. The proposal that the FCC has just adopted would eliminate that requirement, even though the companies are marketing in another language.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Great. Thank you. I agree that I think consumers should know this.

I would like to enter into the record this article, October 10, 2022, from The Verge. It is titled "Brendan Carr wants to let internet providers charge hidden fees again."

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Without objection—

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Thank you, I yield back.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK [continuing]. So ordered.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. All right, the Chair recognizes Representative Cammack for her 5 minutes of questions.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and thank you to our witnesses.

Commissioner Carr, great to see you again. You could hardly get a word in edgewise a minute ago, so would you like to take 30, 45 seconds or so to respond to the Representative's accusations, we will say?

Mr. CARR. Well, look, as a general matter, I will say this. There is a lot of discussion here about prices and affordability. But thanks to President Trump, that is changing. Since January 2025 alone, prices for wireless plans are down over 4 percent. They are down over 7 percent from Biden-era highs. Prices for smartphones are down 9 percent, and speeds are up. So prices are down, speeds are up, and competition is intensifying.

In respect to broadband labels, if you look at the chart that was held up, it is very confusing. And that is the point that we are looking at, is how do we get the information that consumers want, whether it is ETF or other information, so that they can find it and see it accurately and quickly. Let's separate the wheat from the chaff. And that is what that proceeding is about.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Absolutely. And we have seen an immense amount of deregulation, which is good for consumers because it helps foster that competition.

And I know you have spoken to me about the REINS Act and the work that is being done there. Talking about REINS Act being the largest regulatory reform effort in American history, what would the passage and adoption of that bill, which would require Congress to have an up or down vote on any major rule or regulation that has an industry impact of \$100 million—what kind of impact would that have at your agency?

Mr. CARR. Well, I think it is important. Again, as we just talked about, we did a sweep through all rules and regulations on the FCC's books. We have eliminated over 1,000 rules or regulations, or teed them up for removal. We have over 2,000 enacted proceedings. Again, when you think about one agency, the FCC, it is actually a relatively small agency, and you spread that out across the Federal Government, so some mechanism to make sure that needless regulations aren't getting on the books and staying on the books would really help unlock further economic growth for the country.

Mrs. CAMMACK. And I just want to repeat that again for folks watching back home. You guys took 1,000—over 1,000—regulations off the books, and prices are coming down. It is almost like the smaller government gets, the better it gets for people across America, right?

Mr. CARR. Right.

Mrs. CAMMACK. OK. I love that.

Well, another issue that you and I have talked about and I know everyone can really understand is the issue of robocalls and scam texts. I must get a half a dozen or a dozen a day, and it makes you want to throw your phone across the room. Talk to me about the work that the agency is doing to stop the scam texts and the fraud that is taking place there, and what authorities or additional authorities your agency would need in order for us to crack down on these robocalls and these scam texts.

Mr. CARR. This is an issue that across the Trump administration and, really, every administration we have had, there has been a lot of work to crack down on illegal robocalls. Right now we are coordinating across the Federal level, whether it is the FCC, FTC, we are working with State attorney generals, as well.

And again, we are tackling this issue at every single portion of the life cycle of the call. We are looking at things like know your customer, so if you are going to onboard a business to allow them to place calls to U.S. subscribers, we are pushing to make sure those telephone companies know much more about those businesses both so that they are legit and, if there is an issue, we can then track it back. So I think Congress could potentially legislate more on the KYC, know your customer, rules to strengthen those even further. But there is some room for the FCC to push, and we are going to do that.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Well, and I know so many of these robocalls and some of these scam texts originate from overseas. We have really graduated from the Nigerian prince who just needs \$5,000 and

then he will, you know, make you a millionaire. We have really graduated——

Mr. CARR. Yes.

Mrs. CAMMACK [continuing]. The scams, right? Talk to me about your coordination efforts with your counterparts overseas and what we need to do here in Congress to strengthen that.

Mr. CARR. Well, one idea that we are pursuing at the FCC is the idea that if you get a call on your phone from abroad, it shouldn't necessarily, in my view, display a U.S.-based area code, because that could mislead someone to think that this is a call originating in the U.S. So if you are a company and you want to have a call center overseas, at least be truthful and honest with your customers. So we are looking at that.

We are looking at potentially doing standards for call centers to make sure that foreign call centers are compliant with our customer service regulations. And so there is a lot of efforts we are taking on that front.

Mrs. CAMMACK. I love it. So again, for folks watching back home, the Trump administration under your leadership is tackling robocalls and scam texts. That is something every American can get behind. I love that.

So I want to in my last 30 seconds talk about the letter that Chairman Hudson sent talking about broadcast ownership caps. Now, there is some debate about whether or not the FCC has the authority to do this on their own or not. And I would like to get your thoughts in the final 20 seconds that I have on the clock.

Mr. CARR. Well, on the authority, this question has been brought up to the DC Circuit already, and the DC Circuit said that 39 percent is the starting point for the FCC's analysis. So I don't think the legal authority issues are that compelling, but we are still looking at it to see if the FCC wants to change its position on that.

And again, I think we are still open minded. But again, we are cognizant of this idea that you have got licensed local broadcasters. And I know I am out of time, but I think, as a Congress, it is important that we figure out, do we want investment in local news? Because right now you have got, you know, Comcast and Disney that are programing almost 100 percent of the content that Americans are seeing. And how do we incentivize the local TV stations to continue to generate their own local news and information?

Mrs. CAMMACK. Absolutely. We are not in the business of supporting monopolies, so I appreciate that.

And with that, my time is expired. Thank you to all our witnesses for being with us.

I yield.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Thank you. The gentlelady yields. The Chair recognizes Representative Landsman for his 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you to the ranking member, FCC leadership for being here.

I want to focus on three big things: the first has to do with corporate consolidation and costs; the second has to do with corruption and what tends to be or oftentimes you find behind the consolidation of these companies; and the third is the overall issue of independence and the impact it has on the American people.

When you all continue—or Mr. Carr continue—to approve the acquisitions of these big companies, which is the direction that I am seeing the FCC take at the moment, we will see higher costs, right?

I mean, when somebody controls the market they increase costs on consumers, so cable costs go up, streaming fees, subscription fees. And the corruption piece is what, obviously, worries so many of us as we are seeing this play out. I am going to just focus on David and Larry Ellison.

They, David, has—is the CEO of—now of Skydance, Paramount or Paramount/Skydance, whatever it is. But they—Skydance was going after Paramount and CBS. In the midst of all of this, \$16 million goes to Trump to settle this legal issue, \$20 million goes to Trump for free ads, he gets all these editorial concessions.

Larry, David's father, runs Oracle. Oracle is the OG of all of this. So in Trump's first term, you know, Larry and David give a ton of money to Trump, and Larry gets a no-bid contract at the VA with Oracle. It has been an absolute disaster, and we have been trying to figure out how to fix it, spending tens of billions of dollars to try to deal with Oracle having been the wrong vendor.

So the question I have, as you are the sort of traffic cop trying to figure this out and make sure that there isn't corruption, as you are looking at the deal now with David trying to go after Warner Brothers, how much—and this is just David and Larry Ellison—how much have David and Larry Ellison given to the Trump coin, Mr. Carr?

Mr. CARR. I don't know the answer to that.

Mr. LANDSMAN. OK. How much money have they given to Trump businesses? Just Larry and David Ellison.

Mr. CARR. I am not sure why I would know that information.

Mr. LANDSMAN. Last one, the MAGA, Inc., the big—you know, Super PAC. Do you know how much money they have given?

Mr. CARR. No, sir.

Mr. LANDSMAN. So the reason you should know, and the reason the American people should know, is because ultimately you are going to weigh in on these acquisitions, and there's going to be questions about whether or not there is corruption behind these corporate mergers. So it is really important for us to know how much these people are giving to the President.

On the issue of independence, I—the concern is—and Ms. Gomez, just very briefly, what is the impact to the American people when we don't have an independent FCC? Just how does it hurt them?

Ms. GOMEZ. It is important to have an independent FCC because we are an expert-driven body that is supposed to make decisions based on our technical expertise, and also to have the respect both domestically and internationally of those that we regulate and are—those with whom we work. When we lose that, people will second guess everything we do because they will just assume we are controlled by the whims of one person.

Mr. LANDSMAN. So to that point about the being controlled by the whims of one person, Mr. Carr—and this is where, like—this is—you are probably going to hate this question, but it is—a genuine question that we are all struggling with, is, when we see the administration folks go out and do some of the stuff on behalf of the President, is it—do you do it—do you go after the media folks, like,

to keep Trump happy because that is what is key to, like, keeping your job? Or are you genuinely going to punish them for criticizing Trump?

Mr. CARR. The FCC has an obligation to make sure that broadcasters comply with their public interest obligations. Licenses, broadcast licenses, are not property rights, and there's things you can do to lose your broadcast license.

Broadcasters are fundamentally different than any other forms of distribution, whether it is cable or podcast or——

Mr. LANDSMAN. Yes, I am going to reclaim my time. I think it is probably a little bit of both, but either way it is scaring Americans, and it is hugely problematic in terms of the future work of the FCC.

With that I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON [presiding]. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Pfluger, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. PFLUGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the work that you all are doing. It is a very important, obviously, time in our country.

Chairman Carr, thank you for your leadership. In 2021 you proposed a multiyear spectrum calendar that auctioned specific megahertz across several bands. I asked your predecessor about issuing a spectrum calendar, but she declined, stating that the Commission cannot produce one because spectrum auction authority had lapsed.

Thankfully, as has been discussed already today, we were able in the Working Families Tax Cut Act to allow the FCC to auction off 800 megahertz of spectrum for commercial broadband use by 2034. So I am very excited about that, and I would ask you that, now that the Commission is in full swing and the auction authority has been restored, give us an idea of what that long-term spectrum calendar looks like and other items that you are pursuing along those lines.

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman, for the question.

As you noted, we now have a concrete, 800 megahertz spectrum pipeline, and the FCC's work is well underway. We are going to hold the first auction in a number of years in the first half of this year, AWS-3 spectrum. Then next up we are finalizing rules for the upper C-band, which will clear at least 100 megahertz. We have sought comment on clearing up to 180 megahertz. There is also active work underway on the 7 gigahertz band, on the 2.7 gigahertz band, and even on license. Again, this month alone we are voting to supercharge WiFi by allowing higher-power devices.

And in addition to all of that, we are clearing the barriers in the secondary market so spectrum that wasn't fully loaded that could have been sitting fallow is moving into the hands of carriers that are loading it and lighting it up and increasing speed. So again, we are seeing increase of speeds, decrease of prices, and enhanced competition.

Mr. PFLUGER. That is great to hear.

Commissioner Trusty, what does that mean for national security needs? Had we not passed that and not been able to get those 800 megahertz out, I mean, what does this do for our competition with China and national security issues?

Ms. TRUSTY. Sure. Well, it means that we are left behind. Now that we have auction authority and a long-term spectrum pipeline, we can meet the growing demands of wireless services, public safety, national security, and emerging technologies. And we can fully participate in the WRC 2027, which is absolutely critical to promoting American values, our economic competitiveness, and national security by having a foundation to develop a unified strategy and so on.

So I really appreciate the leadership of the subcommittee.

Mr. PFLUGER. You read my mind on the next question, which was WRC 2027 and the steps that we are taking to support the U.S. position and be prepared for that and show some leadership.

I will give both of you guys a chance to answer on that.

Ms. TRUSTY. OK, sure. So I think this is really important, and I think the focus should be on aligning public and private-sector interests. We also should be engaged in pre-WRC coordination with our international allies so that we can harmonize our preferred standards and technologies. And I think we need to work with Congress to ensure that we have the resources to support our technical and diplomatic representation needs.

As you know, the WRC 2027 is in Shanghai, China, which creates some unique security challenges for us. The State Department is taking the lead working with the ITU and with Commission staff and NTIA to resolve those challenges. But again, we need to be fully engaged in this conference so that we can win when it comes to our economic and national security.

Mr. PFLUGER. That is fantastic.

Chairman Carr, let me pivot just a little bit. I want to kind of talk about the public interest and the responsibility that you all have as Commissioners to protect the public interest, and just give you some time to explain what that means to our country for the licenses that you hand out, especially broadcast licenses.

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman.

So broadcasters are unique among all other distributors of information or even data. They have a license given them by the Federal Government, and that necessarily means the Government has excluded other voices that might have wanted to use those airwaves. And so they have an obligation to stand not just in their own shoes but in the shoes of their entire community of license. And that means they have to operate differently than a cable channel or a podcast or social media.

And what has been interesting to me is that, on the Democrat side, there is a lot of simply projection and distortion. If you go back to the Biden years, there was actual weaponization of the FCC in communications policy. As we noted, there was members of this committee that wrote letters to cable companies to pressure them to drop conservative channels simply because they were viewed, in their words, as right-wing media outlets.

You had Democrats in Congress write a letter to the FCC asking it to investigate the news activities of Sinclair Broadcast because they disagreed with the views of Sinclair. They viewed that they were right-wing, and there has been discussion about nothing negative happened after that letter. There were 227 routine Sinclair licenses that came up for renewal or pending during the Biden

years, and all but 1 of those—so 226—were not renewed by the FCC. That was unprecedented. It had never happened before. So Democrats put pressure, and it engendered results.

What we are doing is applying the public interest standard in an evenhanded way. And for people that benefitted from the weaponization during the Biden years, that may feel like discrimination, but it doesn't make it so.

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. PFLUGER. I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Florida, Ms. Castor, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Ms. CASTOR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our FCC Commissioners.

The FCC plays a very important role to ensure communication services and WiFi is affordable for American families and available.

Commissioner Gomez, your—the takeaway from your testimony, if I can summarize it, is now the Commission is spending less time on consumer needs and has diverted its attention to powerful special interests. It does appear—and I share your concern—that the FCC has taken a tact that will make life more expensive for American families at a time when they are being crushed by the rising cost of living. And one example of this is what the FCC has done to make it harder and more expensive for students to access the WiFi they need to—under E-Rate that provides affordable WiFi to students in K-through-12 schools and to libraries and to families.

This is so important to bridge the digital divide. I mean, all of us here, you would—maybe you would scoff that—the availability of WiFi because it is ubiquitous for folks who can afford it. But there are so many students and families that can't afford WiFi right now.

You have—you opposed the ripping away of those E-Rate dollars for certain students. Why?

Ms. GOMEZ. That is correct. We need to make sure that broadband is accessible to everyone, and part of that is ensuring that it is affordable. And there are a lot of families for whom it is not affordable to have broadband access.

So we had the Affordable Connectivity Program, which was the most successful nationwide program to ensure affordability. But sadly, we ran out of funds for that. So the next action that the FCC takes under this administration is to rip away the hotspots and the WiFi on school busses for students.

And the hotspots are also handed out by libraries, and these are often the only means that people have to access the most important communications medium of the 21st century, and that is broadband. They need that in order to be digitally literate so they can participate in the artificial intelligence economy, as well. And they need it in order to apply for jobs, in order for students to do their homework, in order for seniors to get their healthcare appointments. Everything is online. We need access for everyone.

Ms. CASTOR. And rather than focus on lowering costs for Americans, it is very concerning that the FCC Chair is using the regulatory power to stifle criticism of the President and change news coverage to please the President. Beyond heavyhanded, it is dangerous and wrong.

Going back to the Skydance acquisition of Paramount and CBS, Chairman Carr blatantly acted to enrich the President and to boost him after months of regulatory delay. The FCC approved the acquisition just days after Paramount agreed to pay \$16 million to settle the President's meritless lawsuit attacking standard editorial edits at "60 Minutes."

And then, in exchange for obtaining FCC's approval of this deal, Trump was also offered \$20 million in free advertising and a host of dangerous editorial concessions, including a promise to root out perceived bias, align its editorial practices to better suit the Trump administration's political agenda, and hire an ombudsman to police the news organization's editorial choices. This was a bribe by any other name, and Chairman Carr rubber-stamped it.

The consequences of these concessions were on full display last month, when the new CBS News editor-in-chief pulled a "60 Minutes" story on allegations of abuse at an El Salvadorian prison, where President Trump has deported hundreds of Venezuelans without due process. Notably, President Trump had numerous conversations with David Ellison, now chairman and CEO of Paramount-Skydance, and his father, Larry Ellison, executive chairman of Oracle, leading up to the merger's approval. But conveniently, none of these interactions were memorialized in the FCC's docket, as required by law.

A corruption out in the open does not mitigate its odious nature and, Mr. Chairman, the American taxpayers deserve so much better.

I yield back my time.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Goldman, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much. Thank you to all the panelists for being here.

Chairman Carr, broadband deployment—obviously a major thing in Texas, especially rural Texas.

Can you give us an update of where we are on broadband deployment across America, but mainly in rural America?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman. Thanks for your leadership on this issue.

We are very quickly turning things around, and the Commerce Department has this \$42 billion program that they have righted the ship on, and we are moving forward with that. We are engaging in permitting reform at the FCC. We have a universal service program that is supporting high-speed builds, and we are bringing new technologies into the market.

This next generation of connectivity includes connectivity directly to your smartphone at a high-speed-internet level to a low Earth orbit satellite. And we are taking steps right now at the FCC to position the United States to lead the world in this new technology. So we are seeing more competition coming online. That is why, again, you are seeing prices going down, speeds coming up, competition enhancing.

There is no way we are raising the "mission accomplished flag." We have to keep pushing harder until every single community has what they need for next-generation connectivity.

Mr. GOLDMAN. And so looking towards the future, what are we looking at? Months? Years?

You know, to have better connectivity across America, what in your mind—what does that look like?

Mr. CARR. We are seeing it right now. We are seeing it this year with shovels going into the ground. We are seeing it with the secondary markets, as we are encouraging spectrum to move so that it can be loaded up.

And right now we have secondary market transactions that folks are turning on their new cell sites immediately. Just one provider last year took spectrum they gained access to that year alone and lit up 23,000 new cell sites, boosting speeds by 80 percent. So we are pushing on this from a technology perspective, from a funding perspective, and coordinating with the other components of the Federal Government that also have funding.

Mr. GOLDMAN. OK, thank you. And I was going to ask before Representative Cammack did about robocalls. Anything further to expand on what we can do to—I mean, there are many constituents of mine that would love to eliminate robocalls.

Is that even a possibility? Or how can we do a better job of making sure that our constituents aren't bothered by robocalls?

Mr. CARR. Yes, robocalls are a significant technological challenge. Historically, it felt like the FCC was a game of Whac-a-Mole. We would find one technology, one type of scam, and we would shut it down.

Right now what we are trying to do is get down lower and look at every single portion of the life cycle of a call and take action, including making it clear that if you are not doing your part as a carrier you are going to get kicked out of the robocall mitigation database, which effectively makes them unable to deliver traffic. And we have a particular focus right now on foreign-originated robocalls, as well.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Great, thank you.

I know you have heard from the Texas Farm Bureau in regards to your drone ban. Can you speak upon that, and is there a solution in sight?

Obviously, many Texas farmers and ranchers like their drones, and like flying them. It is better for their operations. Can you speak about the ban, and is there a solution for the farmers and ranchers of Texas in using drones?

Mr. CARR. At the end of last year national security agencies came together and made a determination, a specific termination, that foreign-produced drones presented an unacceptable threat to U.S. national security. And President Trump has been clear that we are going to reestablish American drone dominance. We have taken a couple steps.

One, because of that national security determination, we added foreign-produced drones to our covered list. But that doesn't mean that consumers that have these drones today can't continue to use them. They can continue to use them today. In fact, if you have a model that was already authorized by the FCC, you can buy a new version of that same model device. The cover list only applies to new models that might seek authorization in the future.

Subsequently, we have also taken some additional action from advice by the Pentagon and others, DHS, that drones on the UAS Blue List are cleared to go through the process. We have also created a mechanism where people can petition for additional clarity around the types of drones.

So again, if you have a drone today that you are using, you can continue to use it, and you can even buy another one of the same drone you have today under the same model number.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Right. OK, thank you very much.

And you were recently at the Consumer Electronics Show?

Mr. CARR. Yes, sir.

Mr. GOLDMAN. What was the coolest or scariest thing you saw? [Laughter.]

Mr. CARR. Well, I think, you know, one of things I am most excited about is AI getting continued to be embedded in new technology. And again, President Trump has made clear that the U.S. is going to lead the world on this. And we have a job, as sort of the pipes and tubes people, to make sure that we have those high-speed internet connections so that AI can flourish in this country.

Mr. GOLDMAN. Great. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the balance of my time. Thank you.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Menendez, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you, Chairman.

In today's world, high-speed connectivity is no longer a luxury. It is essential to how Americans work, learn, access health services, and stay connected to their families and communities. Expanding affordable, high-speed broadband access across the country is essential to ensuring that American families can thrive in the digital economy.

Commissioner Gomez, just yes or no. Is the FCC's role to ensure that every American, regardless of where they live or their background, has access to reliable, high-speed communications services?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you.

And is ensuring that Americans have affordable connectivity and access to digital equity programs critical to the FCC fulfilling that role?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you.

Before President Trump appointed Chairman Carr head of the Commission, the FCC made real strides in expanding broadband access. Since then, many of those critical efforts have been stopped or been rolled back.

Commissioner Gomez, would you say the FCC's rollback of programs and initiatives that support affordable broadband and digital equity has undermined the FCC's mission to deliver broadband access to every community?

Ms. GOMEZ. I would.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Thank you.

I agree. That is why I am so concerned that under Chairman Carr's leadership the FCC has deviated from its core mission.

Further, since President Trump took office, we have seen the FCC's independence weakened.

Chairman Carr, you authored the FCC's section of Project 2025, in which you state on page 845, "The FCC is an independent regulatory agency." Is that correct?

Mr. CARR. Oh, I authored that in my personal capacity. I don't say this to dodge, it is just a—

Mr. MENENDEZ. It is—

Mr. CARR. Just as a point of—

Mr. MENENDEZ. But you did. You did. I understand—

Mr. CARR. Just as a point of clarification, I just want to—

Mr. MENENDEZ. Prior to you being named Chairman, you had written that the FCC was an independent regulatory agency.

I am going to continue. And Chairman Carr, just yes or no. Did you testify before the Senate Commerce Committee on December 17, 2025? Just yes or no.

[No response.]

Mr. MENENDEZ. Yes, I believe you did. It is in the record. And at that hearing you testified in response to a question from Senator Ben Ray Lujan that the FCC is no longer an independent agency. And you reiterated that point earlier today.

Prior to the Senator's question, the FCC website was clear that the Commission is an independent agency. But shortly after your response, this language was removed from the website, as displayed here.

[Slide shown.]

Mr. MENENDEZ. Chairman Carr, did you decide in the middle of the hearing to officially abandon the FCC's independence, or had that decision already been made by you and President Trump prior to the hearing?

Mr. CARR. This is an important conversation. So the way—

Mr. MENENDEZ. Yes, and my question is just on timing.

So did you make that decision during the hearing or prior to the hearing? Because it was this—because the website said prior to the hearing that it was an independent agency. You made a comment during the hearing, and then someone changed the website to say—to make no reference to it being an independent agency.

So I just want the American people to know, had that decision already been made when you walked into the hearing, or did you make that decision at the hearing?

Mr. CARR. I am pleased that the FCC's website reflects my views. And what I am saying—

Mr. MENENDEZ. That the FCC is not an independent agency. That is correct, right? So your view was—entering the hearing, it was an independent agency. During the hearing, no longer an independent agency. So that is your view, that it is not an independent agency.

Mr. CARR. That is not correct. The independence is determined by a number of factors. It is multi-members, it is term of years. But the main key piece is can a Commissioner be removed by the President for no reason or any reason. And historically, the view had been that courts would read into the Communications Act for cause removal protection that wasn't in the statute.

Mr. MENENDEZ. OK, so let's just—

Mr. CARR. But now the view of the courts——

Mr. MENENDEZ. Let's just talk about the independence, speaking to——

Mr. CARR [continuing]. The FCC is not——

Mr. MENENDEZ. So I understand you are trying to make the case for what independence——

Mr. CARR [continuing]. My view on that——

Mr. MENENDEZ [continuing]. Could be made. But you no longer clearly want to say that it is an independent agency and just be up front about it, as you did in Project 2025, as you did on the website entering that hearing. So it is just a question of were you misleading the American people because a decision had been made, or it was something that you had previously discussed with Trump.

On the issue of independence, you talk about broadcasters' public interest standard, and we have listed a number of instances where the FCC has gone after broadcasters.

Can you tell the committee what investigations or actions the FCC has taken for coverage of Democrats that the FCC has disagreed with? Because there has been a number of things for President Trump. But what have you done that you have—that the FCC has thought was in violation of the public interest standard as it relates to coverage of Democrats?

Mr. CARR. The FCC right now has investigations into NPR, PBS, CBS——

Mr. MENENDEZ. Regarding their coverage of Democrats? Regarding their coverage of Democrats. That is a question. Not the number of investigations. Regarding the coverage of Democrats, are there specific investigations specifically to the coverage of Democrats?

Because there's a number of Republicans—for Republicans and Trump. What are you doing with respect to the coverage of Democrats that shows that it is fair, balanced, and you are not picking winners and losers? Just tell me what you are doing.

Mr. CARR. We don't have investigations that are targeting Republicans or Democrats. We have investigations that are focused——

Mr. MENENDEZ. Well, you have been clear about this. And you have been lauded by the President for going after people who disagree with the President's policies or who articulate positions that differ from the President's policies. I am just wondering——

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time is expired.

Mr. MENENDEZ [continuing]. To show that you are balanced, what are you doing to show the American people that you continue to be an independent agency by going after agencies and broadcasters in a fair and balanced way?

We know you are not, and that is why I am glad that you are here. But we need to have more of these conversations.

I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired. If the Chairman would like to respond, I would give you a few seconds.

Mr. CARR. I would say we have a range of different investigations that are underway right now. We are enforcing the public interest standard, and that is the work that we are doing.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from North Dakota, Representative Fedorchak, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I first want to step back and talk a little bit about the great work that is being done in combination with the President, your agency, and Congress.

For the first time in 4 years we are having spectrum auctions. That was completely ignored by the last administration, at the peril of our country in very serious races against China on some of these technology fronts. Unleashing BEAD funding to help connect America to broadband; deregulation, driving down costs, 1,000 regulations eliminated by your work alone; modernizing satellite regulations; and protecting vital submarine cables. Those are just a few of the great things that are already being done, and it has only been a year.

So thank you for your leadership. Thank you for delivering on many of the tools that Congress passed and gave you in the One Big, Beautiful Bill. It is going to make a real difference to everyday Americans.

With that I want to pivot a little bit to a couple issues that are really important to my State.

Universal Service Funding. Chairman Carr, North Dakota has been a leader in using Universal Service Funding to help connect our State. We have one of the largest rural State broadband deployments of any place in the country. So for anybody looking to do that great work, North Dakota is a model on how it can be done.

But moving forward, there is still a lot of uncertainty in the long-term plan for securing universal service, the Universal Service Fund.

What—how should we be thinking about this? And what should Congress be doing? What sort of recommendations do you have?

Mr. CARR. Well, thank you, Congresswoman, and thanks for your leadership. I had a chance to visit North Dakota and see the great progress that is being made there. And obviously, there is much more work we need to do.

There are several actions we are taking on universal service. One is taking a look at our high-cost programs. And how do we make sure that, in this idea of a high-cost 2.0, what is the future of high-cost support look like? And we are going to be asking some questions about that. We are also looking at ways to make sure we bring new technologies online, including low Earth orbit satellites, freeing up spectrum, and permitting reform. I think all of those combined is why you see us finally turning things around with prices coming down, with speeds going up, and with construction projects finally getting underway.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. How should we be working to stabilize the fund, though?

Mr. CARR. The bicameral working group that the House and the Senate is involved in, I think, can play a really constructive role. We talked in the Senate hearing last—at the end of last year about the FCC collaborating with that group, and I think we are going to start that process, potentially as soon as this month, to make sure that we are coordinated there.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. And the timeline on that, how urgent is it to get some certainty here in this long-term funding pool?

Mr. CARR. Yes, when you look at the lifecycle of investments, particularly for rural broadband, it is over many, many years. And so we need to be able to step in and provide that long-term sustainability for these programs.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. OK, very good. I want to pivot a little bit. You mentioned the low Earth satellites, low Earth orbit satellites. The University of North Dakota just last year launched its ROADS satellite mission, which established a dedicated satellite operations training facility at the University of North Dakota. I would like to see more of this type of work, particularly with regard to competing with China.

So how should Congress think about the FCC's role in this space, in particular in relation to competition with China and around the LEO satellites, Earth stations, and ITU coordination?

Mr. CARR. Well, China has made clear that they want to dominate when it comes to the delivery of NextGen services from space. They are, predictably, copying a lot of the technologies from U.S. providers. So one thing we have to do is go as fast as we can so there is nothing holding back America's innovators from launching new satellites, next generation satellites. And that is what we are doing. We are clearing out backlogs and we are moving much faster.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Are you working on the satellite licensing timelines, as well? I have heard that that is a program that is often a source of delay.

Mr. CARR. It is true. We are now working on a couple fronts. One, to eliminate whole categories of things that don't require either licenses or don't require certain types of lengthy coordinations. We are taking them out of the system, and we are moving to what we describe internally at the building as a much more assemblylike process, assembly-linelike process, so that we give people clear parameters to shoot for with their applications, and they hit the mark, and it moves on, and get away from sort of a bespoke review process that slowed things down.

And we are seeing results. Again, this latest generation constellation that we approved, we went in about half the time as the prior one.

Mrs. FEDORCHAK. Very good. Mr. Chairman, if you need more tools from Congress, we are here to help. So thank you for your work.

Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana, Mr. Carter, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and ranking members.

Over the last year the Federal Communication Commission, under Brendan Carr's leadership, has recklessly abandoned its core principle to operate as an independent agency. Instead, it has weaponized its power to bully news organizations and broadcasters that disagree with the President on his political agenda.

That is unfortunate. I stand firmly against this misuse of Federal power to suppress free speech, and will fight to protect everyone's First Amendment rights.

Mr. Carr, at one point it appeared that you appreciated the First Amendment. At one point it appears that you recognized its value. Somewhere along the line you appeared to have lost your compass.

That is unfortunate, because the American people deserve better. The American people deserve freedom of speech that allows expression without fear of retribution. That is not the America that we should have. We have a rule of law. We have a Constitution. We have those protections. And unfortunately, sir, you have failed in the regard of protecting those rights.

So I am going to pivot, because I really don't have time for filibuster, and we have a need for questions to be answered.

Commissioner, as the cochair of the WiFi Caucus, I am encouraged by the FCC's continued commitment to dedicating the 6 gigahertz band for unlicensed use, which is essential for WiFi technologies.

How critical is it for the FCC to ensure that sufficient spectrum remains available for unlicensed use to both support the continued growth and innovation of WiFi technologies and to help the U.S. remain competitive with China and the development of cutting-edge wireless technologies?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

You know, unlicensed spectrum was an experiment decades ago, when I still worked at the FCC, and it has turned out to be an enormous benefit for our economy, for our global leadership in spectrum, and in technology. So it is important that we have sufficient unlicensed spectrum for WiFi and other such uses.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. What would happen in the case if we didn't have—if there wasn't enough unlicensed spectrum accounts to anticipate increased usage in WiFi?

Ms. GOMEZ. Well, we don't want to choke off other services. For example, we all have WiFi in our homes. Well, it does us no good to have the gigabit speeds if we don't have WiFi that is capable within our own homes to give us the benefit of those gigabit speeds.

It is also just really important for innovation. We have amazing innovative services that use WiFi and use connected devices throughout everything we do. And so we need to make sure we have sufficient spectrum to make sure that we can continue to evolve these technologies and support them.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. So of late we have heard the discussion about affordability, the importance of affordability, the importance of making sure that we see these tools that are no longer something that is luxury but is a necessity.

How does preserving and expanding access to unlicensed spectrum help advance affordability and digital opportunity for rural and underserved communities like that of my district?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, WiFi is a very important tool for giving access to everyone who needs access to broadband. Whether we get them through our library or we have students that are sitting in the parking lot of a McDonald's in order to access broadband, what WiFi has enabled is this type of accessibility, and it is very important that we continue to support it.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Under the Biden administration, Louisiana, I am very proud to say, was number one. We were ready. We were ready for shovels in the ground with the BEAD program.

Under the Trump administration there was a drastic halt. And as a result of that halt, although it was said that it was intended—that it was going to make things better, faster, we had “taken too long.”

But Louisiana was first, was ready. Our Republican Governor hailed this as one of the most monumental infrastructure advances in Louisiana. Yet now we hear that—from my colleagues—I think Mr. Latta said a little while ago that thankfully we were able to stop this because things weren’t moving fast enough.

Well, in fact, we were moving fast enough and we had done all of the legwork through a Democratic Governor and a Republican Governor, only to be halted by this administration, which leaves us now with a far less superior product that is going to ultimately cost more money, and the people will get less service and an inferior product.

Real briefly.

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman’s time has expired.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Can—

Mr. HUDSON. I will allow the witness to answer.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. You will let her answer? Thank you, sir.

Ms. GOMEZ. I will follow up.

Mr. HUDSON. Go ahead.

Ms. GOMEZ. Oh, I am allowed to answer?

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Yes, yes, you—

Ms. GOMEZ. I am sorry.

Mr. HUDSON. Take a few seconds.

Ms. GOMEZ. Very quickly, yes, we are over a year since—or about a year since this administration took over and complained about the amount of time that it took to deploy under the last administration. And yet they have now effectively added yet another year.

So I am concerned that this administration has a race to the bottom in terms of what provision—what technologies it is going to use to provide broadband service, and I am hopeful that the end outcome is that everyone gets the broadband they need to participate in the artificial intelligence economy.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. And Mr. Chairman, I am going to submit for the record and ask that you have an opportunity to answer, because obviously NextGen 911 is a huge issue, making sure that we are providing opportunities for law enforcement to actually be able to access the greatest technologies that we have when, in fact, today they can’t.

Mr. HUDSON. I agree with you. That is why I let you go a little extra, but—

[Laughter.]

Mr. CARTER OF LOUISIANA. Yes, sir.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Indiana, Ms. Houchin, for 5 minutes to ask her questions.

Mrs. HOCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the ranking member for holding today’s hearing and for the witnesses for being here.

The Federal Communications Commission plays an integral role in closing the digital divide, promoting competition, and ensuring Americans can access reliable communication services that are essential for work, education, healthcare, and public safety. I am especially glad to welcome Chairman Carr and Commissioners Trusty and Gomez from the FCC here today.

I also want to just commend the Trump administration for finding \$21 billion in savings under the BEAD program, which I know is under Secretary Lutnick. But I do hope that that \$21 billion in savings on the BEAD program will be put toward deployment in a technology-neutral way, and that it might go even to updating our National Broadband Map, which is what I want to focus some of my comments on today.

One of the most, I think, underappreciated tools the FCC manages is the broadband map. We relied on it when I was a State legislator, as we were trying to roll out a broadband grant program that would avoid overbuilding in areas that already had access. It is a map that is increasingly relied upon not just by the FCC but by other Federal agencies, State broadband offices, and communities across the country. It really shapes where taxpayer dollars go, how programs are designed, and, again, preventing overbuilding and making sure that we are actually reaching unserved Americans.

But the map is inaccurate. And if it is inaccurate, then everything down from it is at risk. In April of 2025 the GAO warned that Federal agencies are directing tens of billions of dollars in broadband funding based on the map despite concerns about the accuracy of the data. The report issued six recommendations for the FCC related to broadband mapping and improving interagency coordination.

Chairman Carr, where does the FCC stand today on implementing GAO's recommendations, particularly validating true access to broadband and strengthening the map?

Mr. CARR. Well, thank you, Congresswoman, for your leadership, including on these critical rural broadband issues.

The FCC is working on all the recommendations there. And one thing that we have is we have a coordination agreement with NTIA and others to make sure that we are getting all of the data put in the map. For instance, as you have indicated, there's dozens and dozens of different broadband funding programs out there, and if we can make sure they all funnel their information through a single map, that will really help improve.

The map itself is starting to stabilize. We are seeing the fabric start to stabilize. We are seeing more accuracy out of it. So I think we are heading in the right direction, but more work to do.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Thank you. You know, many of my colleagues and I, we are working on both sides of the aisle on legislation that does rely on the accuracy of the map. That includes my Data BRIDGE Act, which directs the FCC to incorporate USDA cultivated land data into the National Broadband Map, and this is important because in rural and agricultural areas we want to make sure that is mapped accurately so that funding reaches an entire farm or field, not just a farmhouse address, and supporting connectivity in modern agriculture like precision ag.

In the time I have remaining I do want to pivot to the broadcast policy, Chairman Carr, specifically the broadcast ownership cap. It is clear the landscape for media has changed over the last several decades, and many young Americans don't—never experienced broadcast television, moving the rabbit ears on the television so you can get your five stations that you could watch. And many Americans really don't know the difference between Fox News Channel and Fox 59.

Under the broadcast cap, what is the impact to local broadcasters if the cap is expanded or not? Why is that an important conversation to have?

And a followup question—and I will give you time to close out—if big networks like NBC News, if they wanted to just get out of the broadcast business tomorrow and sell to conservative stations or any stations like Fox or Sinclair, wouldn't the broadband—or wouldn't the—sorry, wouldn't the broadcast ownership cap prevent that from happening? And is that in the public interest?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congresswoman. We are looking at a number of issues related to this right now, and we haven't made any final decision. We are still taking input.

I think one of the things that I have been concerned about, to your point, is you have these licensed local broadcast stations that are supposed to be serving the needs of their individual communities. But over the last dozen-plus years, you have seen these large, national programmers, Comcast and Disney, that have just come to dominate those local TV stations. So when you turn on your local TV stations, almost the entire time now you are just viewing programs that have been produced in New York and Hollywood.

And so we are looking at ways, structurally and otherwise, to potentially insert some more competition because I think, again, if we care as a country about local news and local reporting, we want healthy local news stations. And it is expensive to produce local news.

At the FCC we had this before. We had rules relating to investment in local newspapers, and we left those rules in place. And over time you saw investment decline, and now the shuttering of local news. So the touchstone has to be localism. Whether we, you know, go forward in this proceeding or not, we haven't made that decision yet.

Mrs. HOUCHIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to continuing to work with the FCC on broadband policies, ensuring that the data is accurate.

I want to give a shout out to Commissioner Trusty for her work on Data BRIDGE. Thank you.

I do know that my community does—

Mr. HUDSON. The gentlelady's time is expired.

Mrs. HOUCHIN [continuing]. Appreciate their local news, and I look forward to continuing to work together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Illinois, Ms. Kelly, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you, Chair Hudson and Ranking Member Matsui, for holding this morning's hearing. And thanks to our witnesses for participating.

This past year, the Trump administration has threatened platforms' ability to responsibly moderate content by unlawfully weaponizing independent agencies such as the FCC. Rather than protecting consumers or fostering competition, this agency is now being weaponized in a calculated effort to sabotage the decisions of private entities and undermine online free speech.

The FCC has repeatedly claimed to oppose censorship, yet its recent posture toward section 230 of the Communications Act reflects a sharp departure from the agency's traditional scope and legal limits. That inconsistency undermines public trust and places us in dangerous times.

Chairman Carr, in Project 2025 you wrote the chapter on the FCC, in which you call for revisions to parts of section 230 to counter what you saw as censorship and bias against conservatives by large technology companies. Chairman Carr, in Project 2025 you wrote, "The FCC has authority to interpret that law, and thus provide courts with guidance about the proper application of the statutory language." Your writing is also consistent with the FCC's general counsel's 2020 legal opinion that the FCC has the authority to interpret section 230.

But there is no language in section 230 directing the FCC to enforce this law. And even if the language is ambiguous, in June 2024 the Supreme Court overturned Chevron deference and stated that courts need not and may not defer to an agency's interpretation of the law simply because a statute is ambiguous.

So Chairman Carr, just yes or no. Does the FCC still have the legal authority to interpret section 230? Just yes or no, please.

Mr. CARR. Section 230 is in the Communications Act, and there's provisions of the Communications Act that give us authority to interpret those terms. And so, yes, the FCC, generally speaking, has authority to implement provisions of the Communications Act.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you for your answer.

Commissioner Gomez, do you agree with Chairman Carr that the FCC has the authority to interpret section 230?

Last I checked, the FCC's website says the FCC does not regulate online content. Is that no longer correct?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question.

Yes, I disagree. I don't think we have authority to—we definitely don't have authority to regulate online content, and we don't want to under the First Amendment.

Ms. KELLY. Thank you for your response.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Carr is now determined to sit back and be America's speech police. If Brendan Carr, who tweeted whether it is the Government shutting down speech or a private platform doing it, these decisions are not made by an oracle of truth, that is what—that is—that I wish would stand up.

Thank you to the witnesses, and I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Idaho, Mr. Fulcher—

Mr. FULCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman—

Mr. HUDSON [continuing]. For 5 minutes of questions.

Mr. FULCHER [continuing]. And thank you to the panel for all your input today. And I have got a question for Commissioner Trusty, but I want to apologize in advance for some of us with dual commitments if some of this is a rerun. So bear with me here.

But Commissioner Trusty, this has to do with spectrum auctions. And I come from the great State of Idaho. There is a lot of rural space in Idaho. And I just want to underscore the importance of wireless deployment in rural, underserved areas such as what I represent.

And when it comes to spectrum auctions, have you got any ideas or input on what we can do to make sure that the small rural carriers get access to that, or somehow get included with those?

Ms. TRUSTY. Sure. Thank you for this question, and thank you for your leadership on this issue.

Making sure small, rural providers can participate in spectrum auctions is critical to fostering competition and making sure we get high-speed wireless services to unserved and underserved areas in these rural communities.

So for the AWS-3 spectrum auction that will be initiated in June, we have designated entities, small businesses, rural telecommunications companies who have bidding credits. So they get a discount on the spectrum. We are also proposing to offer bidding credits to small, rural telecommunications providers in the upper C-band auction, as that is being debated in the NPRM that is currently before us.

Mr. FULCHER. OK, thank you. Great. Thank you for that.

Commissioner Carr, first of all, thank you for your work in a lot of this related area too. As you recall, there is a lot of Federal land in the West, and you have been helpful in helping us get access to some of that.

I want to just put a plug in for legislation that I passed through this committee that, when it comes to deploying broadband infrastructure across previously disturbed Federal lands, that there is an exemption for that from NEPA if that is—has to be disturbed again when it comes to broadband deployment.

Is that something that you can support in terms of putting the infrastructure in place in rural areas?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman, for your leadership on these key permitting reform issues.

We are looking right now at additional relief with respect to courts or otherwise overriding NEPA and environmental reviews to put needless reviews in place. We want to try to cut through that. And the work that you are doing in Congress and elsewhere is important to that.

Mr. FULCHER. It really does slow things down unnecessarily, in my view.

And I am going to shift gears a little bit to a totally different topic, but GPS. We went through recently a Homeland Security review and didn't realize just how much GPS was involved with many, many things. And one of the concerns that came up as part of that dialog was that we don't have a good redundancy system. There is not necessarily an auxiliary system.

Are you looking at anything potentially to address that need in case there was a disruption of service to the GPS system?

Mr. CARR. Most Americans don't realize how dependent we are for GPS for precision navigation and timing. It is a great system, but it is a single point of failure.

So one of the very first things that we did when I became Chair is start the process of looking at standing up alternatives, a system of systems to GPS. I think it is important at the FCC that we keep moving forward to do our part to look at a range of different ways that we could stand up alternatives or complements to GPS.

Mr. FULCHER. We are told that some other countries have got some auxiliary systems. That is why I asked the question. Thank you for looking at that.

I did have a question regarding broadcast ownership, but Congressman Houchin addressed that with you, and so I won't force you to repeat the response on that.

Mr. Chairman, with that I yield.

Mr. CARR. Thanks.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the representative from Virginia, Ms. McClellan, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. Thank you, Chairman Hudson and Representative Ranking Member Matsui, for holding this very important hearing. And thank you to the Commissioners for being here.

I am probably the most excited about this hearing of any other hearing we have had thus far. I graduated law school one year after the Telecommunications Act of 1996 passed. I was one of the lawyers who worked on, I think, the only arbitration before the FCC under that Act. And I ended my legal career helping my client try to figure out how to provide inputs to the FCC broadband map.

So I could spend hours, hours talking to you, asking questions about the FCC's critical role, how we can work together to modernize the Communications Act, how we can ensure Americans can communicate freely, affordably, reliably, how we can help with pole attachment issues, as someone who—yes, I also climbed a telephone pole. But I only have 5 minutes.

And so in this first conversation with you I want to focus on what I think is the FCC's most important role, and that is ensuring that the public, not political interference, remains at the center of our communications ecosystem, which, as you have heard today, there is a lot of concern about.

Because since January of this year, at the behest of the President and under Chairman Carr's leadership, it appears the FCC has been pursuing a course that mirrors the goals of Project 2025: consolidating Executive control, weaponizing regulatory authority, and pressuring speech and media that fall out of political favor with the President.

These actions represent a clear departure from the FCC's historic mission and a dangerous erosion of the guardrails that protect free speech. And that is why earlier this year I offered an amendment to our oversight plan that said that this committee would remain committed to investigating any instances of the FCC weaponizing this independent agency against the news media to settle the scores of the President or anyone else, because that is the epitome of abuse.

And I noted in that hearing that our Founding Fathers believed that freedom of speech and the press are vital safeguards against government overreach and are crucial for an informed citizenry and democracy.

George Mason wrote in the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the precursor to the Bill of Rights, “that freedom of the press is one of the greatest bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotic governments.”

James Madison said that “for the people to rule wisely, they must be free to think and speak without fear of reprisal.”

Benjamin Franklin said that freedom of the speech “is a principal pillar of a free government,” and “when this support is taken away the constitution of a free society is dissolved.”

And I can’t be a graduate of UVA and not quote Thomas Jefferson, who believed “our liberty depends on the freedom of the press, and that cannot be limited without being lost.”

And so you can see why we are so concerned about how the FCC conducts itself as it plays a critical role protecting these linchpins of American democracy.

So Commissioner Gomez, as someone with a front row seat to how the FCC has operated under the Trump administration and Chairman Carr’s leadership, I want to commend you for your initiative, the First Amendment Tour, to challenge government censorship and control. And I want to know if you could share with us some of what you have heard from broadcasters, journalists, freedom of speech advocates while you have been traveling around the country.

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for that question, Congresswoman.

Yes, I have launched a First Amendment Tour because I have been so concerned about this administration’s abuse of its regulatory authority in order to target content in the free press. And what I have heard from communities is a lot of concern, and this concern is bipartisan. It is across the ideological spectrum because freedom of speech and the freedom of the press is paramount to our democracy.

I have also heard a lot of concerns about the level of consolidation and the capitulation of the corporate owners of these media companies in order to curry favor with this administration.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. And what have you heard from small and minority-owned broadcasters about the unique role that they play in delivering local news, music, and entertainment that reflect the voices of all communities and not just the majority community?

Ms. GOMEZ. Small broadcasters are really the salt of the earth when it comes to serving their communities, and it is so important that we maintain a diversity of viewpoints that reflect the communities in which these broadcasters are serving.

There is one thing I would like to correct for the record, and that is there are four national networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, and Fox—not just two. And the local broadcasters that are seeking to merge are actually corporate behemoths, not small local broadcasters.

Ms. MCCLELLAN. OK. I thank you for that. I hope this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship with all of you, and we have lots of geeking out that we can do.

And with that I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey, Mr. Kean, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Chairman Carr, Commissioners Gomez and Trusty, for being here today.

Chairman Carr, supporting first responders' ability to communicate with the public and with others is of critical importance. I was interested to see that in August of 2025 the Commission released a notice of proposed rulemaking concerning the Emergency Alert System and Wireless Emergency Alerts. I agree that it is important that our Nation's alert and warning systems are closely examined so that fire, EMS, and police personnel can communicate as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

Can you provide an update on this process and give an overview of your vision for the next generation of Wireless Alert System?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman. This is critical. In fact, the very first project I worked on at the FCC, all the way back in 2012 when I started at the agency, was on these types of emergency alerts. And if you look back over the years, sort of every different compilation of the Commission that comes in sort of adds something else on top of the existing system.

And we haven't, at least in my view, stepped back and said, as a matter of first principles, if we were designing this system today with today's technology, how would we do it? And that is the point of what this is designed to do. It is a voluntary system, so we have to be careful about how much we put on top of that, but we are asking all of the questions as to how we make this work in the future.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you.

Chairman Carr, you spoke in support of direct-to-cell satellite connectivity. How can we strengthen coordination between the FCC and the private sector to expand the availability of direct-to-cell satellite communications?

Mr. CARR. Thank you, Congressman. We just spoke about geeking out, and this is something that I really geek out on.

There is this new generation of connectivity where you can go straight from your smartphone right to a low Earth orbit satellite. And the low Earth orbit satellite is effectively like a cell tower in the sky. What that does is eliminates dead zone. If we have enough spectrum capacity for that, you can get truly high-speed service right to your phone anywhere. Or think about any type of device as well.

And so what we are doing right now is positioning the United States to lead the world in this new technology by making sure that we have the spectrum resources and the regulatory framework for this direct-to-cell technology to really flourish, and to flourish in America first.

Mr. KEAN. So I believe it is very important that the U.S. maintain leadership in space.

How can the FCC support updating regulations on satellite-based services within bodies like the International Telecommunications Union to remain dominant and to counteract anticompetitive efforts by other nations?

Mr. CARR. One of the touchstones of our spectrum and satellite policy through the years has been reciprocity. We have a lot of U.S.-based satellite providers, but there's a lot of European satellite providers that are doing business here in America. And I am concerned, as a general matter, if you look at some of the protectionist conduct that is taking place by European regulators, you see it all across the tech ecosystem, but we are seeing it rise with respect to satellite in particular.

And I would simply remind my counterparts in Europe that, again, that reciprocity has been key to a successful regime. We want to make sure that U.S. satellite providers are treated fairly when they are doing business in Europe.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you. And Chairman Carr, I appreciate the FCC's efforts to review regulations in order to streamline outdated and burdensome rules and to support American innovators.

First, can you give us an update on the progress of the effort at large and share any plans for deregulation in the coming year that you feel is important to support this effort?

Mr. CARR. We have launched the largest deregulatory effort in the agency's history. To date it is over 1,000 different rules or regulations that have been either eliminated or teed up for elimination, over 2,000 inactive dockets. And we are going to continue to work away to get rid of substantive regulations that's holding back innovation.

Again, just in a short year you are already seeing wireless prices come down, speeds increasing, competition enhancing, bridging the digital divide. This is the work that we are doing, and it is delivering real, tangible results for the American people. And we are just getting started.

Mr. KEAN. So what is the best way for companies like those in New Jersey to most effectively engage with the FCC and offer their perspectives to make the delete-delete-delete effort as productive as possible?

Mr. CARR. One thing that we want is to hear from them directly about the types of rules and regulations that are holding them back. That is why I try to spend as much time outside the Beltway as possible in this job, meeting directly with broadband providers and tower climbers. And I ask them, you know, "What is holding you back?"

One idea that we have heard is—came up over here in legislation, which is railroad crossings. Again, it seems like a random issue, but that has, you know, substantively been holding back broadband builds in this country. So we want to hear directly from them what is slowing them down.

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. KEAN. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you, and I now recognize the last member of the subcommittee before we go to Members who we welcome here who waived on.

Mr. Obernolte from California, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Carr, thank you for your testimony today. I want to start by adding my voice to the chorus of voices that you have

heard in the hearing today about the FCC's broadcast ownership rules.

Now, obviously, those rules were written in an era when broadcasters were just competing against other broadcasters. But now, in our digital era, we have broadcasters who compete about—against players like social media platforms, streaming platforms. And although I myself am not an advocate of expanding the regulation to those entities, I think that we do have an obligation to keep a level playing field and make sure that we are not handicapping our broadcasters.

So you are aware we sent you a letter last March on this topic. I was a signatory to that. I won't belabor the point, I know it has been brought up here before, but I just wanted to make sure that you knew how important that was to the members of the subcommittee.

I also want to talk a little bit about the C-band auction that is coming up the middle of next year, you know, or before. As you are aware, in 2021 we had the auction of the lower—for the lower C-band, and that had some pretty serious consequences for the aviation community in the use of radar altimeters, the interference with those radar altimeters, and that was unintended, it was kind of unforeseen, caused a lot of chaos. I am a pilot myself, so I got to experience some of that chaos firsthand. And I know that there are things that we wish we had done differently.

So as we approach this upcoming auction for upper C-band, what is the FCC planning to do differently to make sure that we don't get a recurrence of that?

Mr. CARR. Well, thank you, Congressman, for the question.

One thing that we are doing is working on the front end on deep collaboration and coordination with the aviation industry and our counterparts. So Administrator Bedford at the FAA, Secretary Duffy at DOT, the White House, myself, we are, you know, regularly in touch, regularly having meetings to work through this.

We have a proceeding right now where we have sought comment on precisely these types of issues. We have a mandate from Congress to free more than—or at least 100 megahertz of spectrum. That is going to likely necessitate new standards for radio altimeters, some retrofitting of radio altimeters, and we are working through all of those issues right now about what is the standard. In fact, the FAA itself is working through their own rulemaking process as well. And again, we are trying to line up all of these actions so that we are ready to go at the middle of next summer.

But, you know, it is probably the biggest effort inside the FCC in terms of the amount of brainpower we have working on it. I know that the media issues get a lot of attention because the media likes to talk about the media, but in terms of the work of the building, C-band and all of the issues that you are talking about is a big workstream for us.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. All right. I am glad to hear it. If I could urge you to, as you prepare for the auction, to consider this issue of mandatory retrofits of radar altimeters, first of all, always keeping in mind that—I mean, to my understanding, we don't actually have a certified retrofit available yet. And even when we do, there is limited production capacity for those radar altimeters and limited

avionics shop capacity. And so we have to have enough of a window to be able to retrofit the entire fleet that needs that new part to avoid that interference.

And second of all, my understanding is that the bidders in this auction would likely be willing to bear the costs of those retrofits. And I think that that is fair, that if you are going to ask a community to retrofit something that they already bought, that the people that benefit, you know, ought to help pay for that. And so, if you could, please keep those things in mind.

And then, in the time I have left, I want to talk a little bit about the spectrum and this seemingly insatiable demand for spectrum that is being driven by not just digital media consumption on portable devices but newly now by AI, and particularly generative AI that is, if you look at it, it is going to be at least a linear increase in the number of the amount of spectrum that we use. In the most dire cases it is exponential. So we are going to run out of spectrum if we—on the path that we are on.

Can you talk us through how the FCC views this? I mean, are we going to run out of spectrum? I know we have directed you to make more spectrum available. Is that going to be sufficient? What do you see the future hold?

Mr. CARR. Yes, right now the United States is a bit out of balance in terms of spectrum policy. We have taken a lot of good action on license, we have taken a lot of good action to have access on the Federal side, to Federal spectrum. But this, you know, high-power commercial spectrum for NextGen is where we really need to focus our efforts, and that is why I think C-band and others are so important.

To your point, we are seeing this hockey stick curve of demand, historically. But now, with AI coming online, we want AI to work directly on your smartphone. Well, that hockey stick just goes straight through the roof. And so we have to continue to bring more spectrum online but also permitting reform. Because if you can split cells by making it not onerous to build a new cell site, that can help take care of capacity as well.

But we are facing, potentially, a shortfall of capacity a number of years from now, which is why this work we are doing right now is so important.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. All right—

Mr. HUDSON. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

And the Chair will remind the committee that we are pushing up on votes at 1:30. It is my intention to drive through, and we have got three members of our full committee who have waived on. I would like to push through these. I would just ask everyone, please observe the time limits so we can get everyone's questions in.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Tonko, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, Chair Hudson and Ranking Member Matsui, for cohosting this hearing, and welcome to our guests.

In my opinion, this hearing is long overdue. The actions of the Federal Communications Commission over the past year have been

deeply troubling and demand serious oversight. As many of my colleagues have discussed, we have seen dangerous violations of free speech, of political interference certainly at what should be an independent agency, and brazen efforts to greenlight illegal broadcast consolidation.

Today I want to focus on the Commission's rollback of basic consumer protections. I listed with great—listened with great interest to Ms. Castor's exchange with the panel as it relates to E-Rate support. In 2024, when the FCC announced it was expanding E-Rate support to include WiFi on schoolbuses and hotspot lending by schools and libraries, I was indeed thrilled. I have long advocated for this expansion as a practical way to narrow that homework gap and reach students who otherwise lack reliable broadband access.

However, last year the Commission reversed its course, and I joined many of my colleagues in calling out that rollback, and I do it again here today.

So Chairman Carr and Commissioner Trusty, I strongly urge you to reconsider your votes and reinstate that rule. This decision was cruel and, I believe, very much short-sighted. It strips students of the tools they need to succeed and widens that digital divide the Commission is charged with closing.

Commissioner Gomez, in your testimony you noted that E-Rate support for buses and hotspots was one of the most effective tools the FCC had to ensure students across the country are not left behind in our digital economy, and I heard some of your—I heard all of your remarks to Representative Castor.

But from your perspective, what impact will students, educators, and libraries experience as a rollback with these E-Rate expansions?

And what does that mean for the FCC's obligation to ensure universal service?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, thank you for that question.

Broadband connectivity is crucial to be able to participate in today's digital economy in order for students to become ready for the digital future, in order for seniors to be able to make their health appointments, in order for people to apply for jobs, in order for veterans to be able to meet their healthcare, as well. And yet, if you don't have access to broadband, we need the ability to provide affordable access to these students and to all these other folks that rely on broadband because today broadband is everywhere. We have—everything is done online.

So losing access via hotspots means students can't do it to do homework. Losing the WiFi means students can't do it while they are on their schoolbuses. There are some States where students are on the schoolbus for 2 hours each way. Think about what they could do to do their homework on those buses, and we pulled that away.

Mr. TONKO. Thank you for the response.

Last month this committee held a hearing on public safety, with witnesses emphasizing that emergency alerts must be effective for everyone, including individuals with language barriers. So it also is disappointing to have seen the FCC delay commonsense safety reforms like multilingual emergency alerts. The Commission had to be sued by State attorneys general, including New York's Letitia

James, for obstruction before publishing its rule on multilingual emergency alerts. And even now, provisions of that rule have been delayed indefinitely.

So Commissioner Gomez, can you explain the risks that delayed multilingual alerts pose to our public safety?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes. It is so important that everyone be able to get access to emergency alerts and that they be able to understand them. If—we can only save lives if people understand the emergency alerts.

So we have squandered time. We have the Olympics and the World Cup coming next year, which is going to require a lot of people to get alerts, if there is a public safety incident, in a language they might understand. So I am hopeful that we will move forward in order to ensure that everyone can understand the emergency alerts.

Mr. TONKO. Well, we see a lot of brutality in our streets and neighborhoods these days. So——

Mr. CARR. Just a point of clarification, because I think this is important. Multilingual alerts could go out before, and they can go out today and then go out tomorrow. So I just want to make sure we are not leaving people with the misimpression that alert originators can't send out multilingual alerts. They can, and we want them to.

Mr. TONKO. OK.

Ms. GOMEZ. And it is true that that is the case. What this does, what the FCC has paused is actually making it easier and more frequent that they will be able to put those out, because right now the vast majority of alerts go out in English because it is the originators that put them out.

Mr. TONKO. Well, thank you. I had other questions, so I will get them to the committee.

But let me just close and say that freedom of speech is the underpinning of our republic.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank——

Mr. TONKO. With that I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. I thank the gentleman.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Mr. Joyce, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. JOYCE. Thank you, Chairman Hudson, for allowing me to join this very important hearing.

The intersection of rural broadband and healthcare is critical to examine as we work together in expanding connectivity to all Americans.

Chairman Carr, thank you for coming to Pennsylvania's 13th congressional district. Thank you for meeting with the providers. Thank you for working with the poll workers and climbing those towers. Your personal impact and commitment is felt in Pennsylvania's 13th congressional district.

Rural districts like the one you visited and I represent are often left behind as broadband deployment accelerates across the country. Your personal commitment to not allow the rural areas to be left behind is important, and that resonates throughout America.

As a doctor, I have seen the impact that the digital divide has on rural healthcare providers. Rural healthcare providers serve

unique populations that are often underserved. We doctors who serve in rural areas often struggle to access telecommunications infrastructure and broadband that is essential to serve our patients.

The RHC program offered by the FCC under the Universal Service Fund aims to provide funding to eligible care providers for telecommunications and broadband services necessary for the provision of healthcare today. The RHC program serves my constituents in Pennsylvania's 13th congressional district. Connecting them and the funding and connectivity resources are important.

It is crucial that we evaluate the efficiency and the effectiveness of the RHC program and how it contributes to the FCC's goal of connecting all of America. At WellSpan Health, the RHC program has allowed hospitals to maintain access to physical, behavioral, and maternal care in Pennsylvania's 13th congressional district.

Chairman Carr, as I have noted, you have visited the 13th congressional district in Pennsylvania on more than one occasion, and you personally are keenly aware of the broadband challenges that the district faces, particularly in the healthcare industry.

How do you measure the effectiveness in the RHC program and the impact of the program that we are seeing in rural communities, in hospitals like WellSpan?

Mr. CARR. Congressman, thank you for the question, and thanks for your leadership for Pennsylvania and for your district.

If you look back just the last 5 years alone, my understanding is that almost \$2.5 million have flowed to your district for rural healthcare, and we are seeing those funds being put to use to make sure people can have access to next-generation care. And we are working together to make sure that we expand rural broadband, as well, to further bolster access to healthcare and NextGen services for the good people in your community.

Mr. JOYCE. As we are talking today, there are patients who are connecting with their doctors right now receiving the care that, to your point, Chair Carr, was not available 2½ years ago. Telehealth is a tool that has become increasingly valuable, as I have noted, in rural areas, in underserved areas. In some areas, telehealth is the most accessible option for patients seeking care.

Commissioner Trusty, you said in your written testimony that you have witnessed how broadband is delivering quality care straight into rural patients' homes through video. How can the RHC program serve providers that are seeking to expand their healthcare options for rural patients?

Ms. TRUSTY. Thank you for the question, and also thank you for your leadership.

So, as you know, the Rural Health Care Program ensures that rural patients have access to modern healthcare or telehealth. In recent months we have made process improvements at the FCC to extend funding deadlines to ensure we have the funding to meet the demand and to roll over additional funding for the funding year 2025 to meet the needs of rural communities across the country.

I think this congressional bipartisan working group on USF is another forum for us to explore additional reforms or modernizations to this program so that all rural Americans can have access to quality healthcare services.

Mr. JOYCE. I look forward to working with you and seeing that expansion continue.

Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to waive on to this important hearing, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Mr. HUDSON. The Chair appreciates that, and I will now recognize the gentleman from California, Mr. Mullin, for 5 minutes to ask your questions.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Chairman Carr, as we have heard today from my colleagues, there are serious concerns about the FCC's actions during your tenure and that they crossed the line into interference with free speech, a concern that I share. Will you simply commit today that the FCC will not use its licensing authority, enforcement role, or claims of news distortion to politically pressure or punish broadcasters for their editorial decisions?

Mr. CARR. The FCC is going to enforce the public interest standard, news distortion, broadcast hoax rule, and, you know, that is the actions we are going to take.

Mr. MULLIN. I want to emphasize the importance of editorial independence to our democracy. Broadcasters, whether public, private, local, or national, need to be able to exercise lawful journalistic judgment without fear of retaliation from the Federal Government. That principle is foundational to the First Amendment and to a functioning democracy.

So Commissioner Gomez, in your testimony today you warned that the Commission has asserted what you described as a "roving mandate" to police speech it does not like, relying on an undefined and unchecked interpretation of the public interest standard.

Can you explain in plain terms the role Congress has given to the FCC?

And should the FCC be in the business of content regulation, especially in light of how people are now receiving their content?

Ms. GOMEZ. Yes, thank you for that question.

The FCC does regulate the broadcast licensing to serve the public interest, but the public interest is not some nebulous standard that can be used in order to target any content that this administration doesn't like, and that is the problem with this continued use of this public interest standard, as it exists to punish broadcasters because of their editorial decisions or because of their news reporting.

We need to go back to simply conducting our role of ensuring that the broadcasters have the infrastructure that they need, and in order to be able to serve their local communities, and that is what I think we should be doing. We should not be pressuring broadcasters on their content. It violates the First Amendment and the Communications Act prohibition on censorship.

Mr. MULLIN. Thank you for that. And out of respect for time, just one final issue. In light of a \$1 billion rescission cut to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and its impact on our emergency alert systems, given that extreme weather events are increasing in both frequency and severity, is the FCC prepared to provide—and I will ask you again, Commissioner Gomez—additional technical support to local broadcasters to both maintain and build out resilient emergency alerting systems, particularly for rural and underserved com-

munities that rely on public and local broadcasters for lifesaving information?

Ms. GOMEZ. Thank you for bringing to light this issue with the defunding of public broadcasters. Not only are we losing educational programming, local news, a lot of civic engagement, but we are also losing the backbone of our emergency alert system. And I am unaware that the FCC has any activities to address this issue, but it is something that we really need to consider.

I would urge Congress to refund public media because of the important services that they provide, both from a public safety perspective and also to their local communities.

Mr. MULLIN. I certainly share that view.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for your testimony.

I yield back.

Mr. HUDSON. Thank you.

I ask unanimous consent to insert in the record the documents included on the staff hearing documents list.

Without objection, so ordered.

[The information appears at the conclusion of the hearing.]

Mr. HUDSON. Seeing there are no further Members wishing to be recognized, I would like to thank our witnesses for being here today.

I remind Members they have 10 business days to submit questions for the record, and I ask the witnesses to respond to those questions promptly. Members should submit their questions by the close of business on January 28, 2026, which tells me I have 10 days until my mother's birthday, because it is the 28th.

[Laughter.]

Mr. HUDSON. Without objection, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:38 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

01.14.26 Oversight of the FCC Hearing

1. A letter from housing organizations to Chair Hudson and Ranking Member Matsui, submitted by the minority
2. A petition from the ACLU addressed to Chairman Carr, submitted by the minority¹
3. An article from The Verge entitled “Brendan Carr wants to let internet providers charge hidden fees again,” submitted by Rep. Barragan
4. A letter from civil rights groups to Chair Hudson and Ranking Member, Matsui, submitted by the minority
5. A letter from the International Commission on the Biological Effects of Electromagnetic Fields to Chair Guthrie, Chair Hudson, Ranking Member Pallone, and Ranking Member Matsui, submitted by the minority
6. A transcript from The Benny Show Podcast, submitted by Rep. Matsui
7. A letter from the National Call for Safe Technology to Chair Guthrie, Chair Hudson, Ranking Member Pallone, and Ranking Member Matsui, submitted by the minority¹
8. An article from Frontiers entitled “U.S. policy on wireless technologies and public health protection: regulatory gaps and proposed reforms,” submitted by the minority¹
9. An article from the Associated Press entitled “How an AM radio station in California weathered the Trump administration’s assault on media,” submitted by the minority
10. An article titled, “Democrats Want Feds To Block Miami Latinos From Hearing Conservative Radio,” submitted by Rep. Fry.
11. ICBE-EMF Scientific evidence invalidates health assumptions underlying the FCC and ICNIRP exposure limit determinations for radiofrequency radiation- implications for 5G¹
12. EHS Letter House 2026 FCC Oversight Hearing Questions for the FCC on Cell Phone and Wireless Radiation Transparency, Safety, and Compliance¹

¹ The information has been retained in committee files and is included in the Documents for the Record at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/IF/IF16/20260114/118825/HHRG-119-IF16-20260114-SD894494.pdf>.



January 12, 2026

The Honorable Richard Hudson
Chairman, House Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui
Ranking Member, House Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Communications & Technology
2311 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hudson and Ranking Member Matsui,

On behalf of the members of the National Multifamily Housing Council (NMHC), the National Apartment Association (NAA), and the Real Estate Technology and Transformation Center (RETTCC), we write in advance of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's Federal Communications Commission (FCC) oversight hearing. We appreciate the opportunity to share how the multifamily broadband market is effectively serving America's renters and urge the Committee to support pro-housing, pro-renter policies that expand connectivity without undermining models that are already delivering results.

Connectivity Is a Core Resident Priority

Reliable, high-quality internet access is essential to residents' daily lives and is a critical amenity in today's rental housing market. Housing providers therefore prioritize investments in connectivity and increasingly rely on tools such as bulk billing and managed Wi-Fi to improve service reliability, reduce costs, and enhance the resident experience. These solutions ensure residents have immediate access to internet service upon move-in—an expectation clearly reflected in the 2024 NMHC/Grace Hill Renter Preferences Survey, in which 87 percent of more than 172,000 respondents rated immediate internet availability as “very important” or “absolutely essential.”

Through negotiated agreements with internet service providers (ISPs), housing providers can tailor connectivity solutions to the specific needs of their communities, including dedicated bandwidth and service-level agreements that ensure performance, reliability, and responsive customer support. This partnership-based model enables seamless, affordable connectivity that meets modern resident expectations.

The Existing Federal Framework Is Working

We commend FCC leadership for fostering innovation and reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens while maintaining access to cutting-edge broadband services in rental housing communities. The current federal regulatory framework governing partnerships between housing providers and communications providers has proven effective in promoting broadband deployment, affordability, and adoption. The FCC has repeatedly reviewed and affirmed the health of the multifamily broadband market, including its analysis of bulk billing arrangements.



Bulk internet agreements deliver broadband service to entire rental communities at a lower per-unit cost than individual subscriptions, expanding access—particularly for low-income, senior, student, and veteran households. By eliminating credit checks, deposits, and equipment rental fees, and often allowing service upgrades, bulk billing reduces barriers to adoption and delivers meaningful cost savings for renters. At the same time, predictable revenue streams enable ISPs—especially smaller and independent providers—to justify the significant upfront investment required to deploy modern broadband infrastructure, including in affordable housing where traditional retail models often fall short. Most recently, in 2024, the FCC reaffirmed the positive role bulk billing can play in serving renters with high-quality broadband.

As the Committee considers solutions to the nation’s broader digital divide, it should look to proven, scalable models already succeeding in the rental housing market.

State and Local Policies Risk Undermining Progress

Despite the success of the federal framework, some state and local policymakers have advanced legislation that could inadvertently undermine broadband access and affordability. A recent example is California’s AB 1414, which runs counter to FCC findings and weakens the economic model that supports broadband investment and adoption in rental housing communities.

Such policies risk deterring infrastructure investment and reducing broadband access, affordability, and service quality. The Committee and the FCC should encourage state and local leaders to build on—not disrupt—the proven success of the multifamily broadband market by leveraging tools like bulk billing and managed Wi-Fi to expand connectivity.

Conclusion

As the Committee evaluates the FCC’s role in advancing connectivity, we urge policymakers to recognize the critical role rental housing providers play in serving consumers and to avoid policies that raise costs or slow broadband expansion. Specifically, NMHC, NAA, and RETTC encourage policymakers to:

- Support policies that preserve the existing broadband partnership model, allowing housing providers and communications providers to negotiate agreements under free-market conditions that promote competition, high service standards, and reliable, high-speed internet.
- Engage housing stakeholders when shaping broadband and infrastructure policy to ensure solutions reflect the realities of the rental housing landscape.
- Encourage state and local leaders to embrace the demonstrated success of multifamily broadband solutions, including bulk billing and managed Wi-Fi, that remove barriers to access, improve affordability, and spur competition.



NMHC, NAA, and RETTC and our members stand ready to work with the Committee and the FCC to advance thoughtful, pro-housing, pro-renter policies that expand connectivity without undermining successful models already delivering results.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wilson Géno
President
National Multifamily Housing Council

Bob Pinnegar
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Apartment Association

Kevin Donnelly
Executive Director and Chief Advocacy Officer
Real Estate Technology & Transformation Center

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Brendan Carr wants to let internet providers charge hidden fees again / Providers have argued that requirements to itemize every fee they charge are burdensome.

by [+ Jess Weatherbed](#)

Oct 10, 2025, 9:14 AM EDT



43 Comments (All New)



Image: Cath Virginia / The Verge, Getty Images



[+ Jess Weatherbed](#) is a news writer focused on creative industries, computing, and internet culture. Jess started her career at TechRadar, covering news and hardware reviews.

Broadband customers may find themselves blighted by unexpected charges again, thanks to Federal Communications Commission chairman Brendan Carr. The FCC has [submitted a proposal](#) to revise “unnecessary” requirements for internet service providers to itemize every fee on monthly bills, citing that it “may confuse customers.”

The proposal comes in response to complaints by ISPs over a [Biden-era transparency rule](#) that took effect in April 2024, arguing that their self-inflicted billing complexity made it impractical and burdensome to list every fee they impose on consumers. Compliance with the rule requires that ISPs either create a broadband “nutrition label” that makes it easier for consumers to accurately

compare plan prices and avoid hidden fees, or include those hidden charges in the overall price.

The FCC isn't seeking to ditch itemized labels entirely, it's specifically targeting requirements for making labels inclusive of location-based fees, machine-readable, multi-lingual, and available to customers over the phone and on online account portals. However, the proposal is also examining ways to further streamline or eliminate "any other label requirements that are unduly burdensome and provide minimal benefit to consumers," which could further impact how labels are presented when shopping for new broadband plans.

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In [a blog post heralding the proposal](#) on Monday, Carr said that broadband labels are being examined to "focus on consumer protection," and to "separate the wheat from the chaff." A vote on the changes has been scheduled for October 28th, and requires FCC approval before it can take effect.

The proposal falls under the "[Delete, Delete, Delete](#)" initiative Carr launched in March that aims appease President Donald Trump's order to remove as many government regulations as possible. As noted by [Ars Technica](#), the Internet and Television Association (NCTA) lobby group specifically [appealed to the FCC](#) under this initiative to have fee itemization rules scrapped, after similar requirements were first imposed on [cable and satellite TV providers in March](#).

43 COMMENTS

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**The Leadership Conference
on Civil and Human Rights**

1620 L Street, NW
Suite 1100
Washington, DC
20036

202.466.3311 voice
202.466.3435 fax
www.civilrights.org



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People for the American Way
Religious Action Center of
Reform Judaism
Service Employees International Union
Sikh Coalition
UnidosUS

President and CEO

Maya Wiley

January 14, 2026

The Honorable Richard Hudson
Chairman

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Doris Matsui
Ranking Member

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hudson and Ranking Member Matsui,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 240 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, and the undersigned organizations, we express our deep concern with the operations of the Federal Communications Commission and urge the Committee to conduct vigorous oversight.

We also ask for this letter to be entered into the record of the January 14, 2026, House Subcommittee on Communications and Technology hearing conducting oversight of the Federal Communications Commission.

Federal Communications Commissioner (FCC) Chair Brendan Carr has weaponized the Commission to fight a culture war for the administration instead of carrying out the Commission's true mission: to serve the people of the United States. As a chief author of the anti-democratic Project 2025, Chair Carr is committed to a vision of a nation that serves the interests of the powerful few. As civil rights advocates, we are deeply alarmed by his attacks on our values and our communities and urge this committee to take seriously its charge to conduct oversight of the FCC.

Censoring the Press and Dissenting Voices: FCC Chair Brendan Carr's pressured American Broadcasting Company (ABC) affiliates to not carry Jimmy Kimmel Live. The FCC has significant influence over the broadcasting licenses of the affiliates, influence that should not be abused to silence dissenting voices for political gain.¹ First amendment experts pointed to Carr's rhetoric and the subsequent (temporary) removal of Kimmel's show as a

¹ Press Release, ACLU, ACLU Responds to Trump Administration Move Censoring Jimmy Kimmel (Sept. 17, 2025), <https://www.aclu.org/press-releases/aclu-responds-to-trump-administration-move-censoring-jimmy-kimmel>.



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textbook example of an undue and violative form of pressure,² and highlighted the many ways in which the FCC has attempted to police speech (both in the issuance of broadcast licenses and the approval of mergers).³ Carr did not learn his lesson to avoid pressuring broadcasters, and shared President Trump's post asking for Seth Myers to be fired on his own X account.⁴

Gutting Media Diversity Rules: The FCC's media ownership rules play an important role in preventing individual companies from dominating national or local markets and fulfilling the FCC's obligation to promote media diversity. Eliminating the media ownership rules abdicates the FCC's statutory obligation, continuing to exclude people of color from broadcast ownership.⁵ Further, relaxing media ownership limits will exacerbate already-low competition, localism, and viewpoint diversity while also harming workers. Several pending mergers, including Nexstar's \$6.2 billion deal to take over TEGNA would blast through existing ownership rules.⁶ We urge the Committee to ensure that the Commission will follow regular process and consider this transaction, and the media ownership rules, with a vote of the FCC Commissioners.

Coercing Companies to Pull Back on Diversity and Equity: We also have serious concerns about the ways in which FCC leadership has weaponized the Commission's merger authority to pressure media and telecommunications companies into abandoning their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programs.⁷ Earlier this year, Chair Carr publicly stated he does not see "a path forward" to approve transactions for companies that maintain DEI programs, encouraging businesses seeking FCC merger approval to "get busy ending" their diversity initiatives.⁸ FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez has condemned this as government overreach that stifles free expression, noting that "there is a freedom of speech component to diversity, equity, and inclusion" and stating that this approach represents "control of a private company's employment practices" that "has nothing to do with what we do at the FCC."⁹ Despite plain civil rights mandates and an abject failure to meet them, the FCC has threatened or coerced many companies to eliminate their programs that aimed to ensure fair treatment of and equal opportunity for women, people

² Anna Branigin, "How Cancel Culture Came for Everyone," Washington Post (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/style/power/2025/10/01/cancel-culture-kimmel/>.

³ Ted Johnson, "Brendan Carr's Threats On Networks May Be 'Jawboning,' And Courts Don't Like It, Legal Experts Say" Deadline (Sept. 19, 2025),

<https://deadline.com/2025/09/fcc-brendan-carr-jawboning-jimmy-kimmel-1236549243/>; Tom Wheeler, "Trump's CBS Lawsuit Ties Media Freedom to FCC's Regulatory Power," Brookings (Feb. 19, 2025), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/trumps-cbs-lawsuit-ties-media-freedom-to-fccs-regulatory-power/>.

⁴ Brendan Morrow, Trump calls for NBC to fire Seth Meyers, FCC Chair Brendan Carr weighs in. USA TODAY (Nov. 17, 2025), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/entertainment/tv/2025/11/17/trump-seth-meyers-fcc-chair-brendan-carr/87315926007/#>.

⁵ George Winslow, "Unions, Civil Rights Groups Argue Localism Will Be Hurt, Not Helped by Eliminating Ownership Caps," TV Tech (Aug. 28, 2025), <https://www.tvtechnology.com/news/unions-civil-rights-groups-argue-localism-will-be-hurt-not-helped-by-eliminating-ownership-caps>.

⁶ Keith Collins and Raj Saha, "How a TV Merger Raised the Pressure on ABC to Suspend Kimmel," New York Times (Sept. 19, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2025/09/19/business/media/abc-nexstar-kimmel.html>.

⁷ Commissioner Anna Gomez, Remarks at US Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Summit, (March 25, 2025), <https://www.fcc.gov/document/commissioner-gomez-remarks-us-hispanic-chamber-commerce-summit>.

⁸ Cameron Coats, Carr: Broadcasters With DEI Programs Could Get Deals Blocked, Radio Ink, (March 24, 2025), <https://radioink.com/2025/03/24/carr-broadcasters-with-dei-programs-could-get-deals-blocked/>.

⁹ Cameron Coats, Gomez: DEI Attacks Part of 'Censorship and Control' Under Trump, Radio Ink (April 8, 2025), <https://radioink.com/2025/04/08/gomez-dei-attacks-part-of-censorship-and-control-under-trump/>.



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of color, people with disabilities, and the LGBTQ community in order for their mergers to be approved.¹⁰ The Leadership Conference made clear earlier this year that our nation's civil rights laws remain in place and the Chairman's efforts to circumvent them is an affront to the nation's commitment to fairness.¹¹

Increasing costs and endangering communities by increasing phone and video prices: The

Commission recently adopted higher prices for consumers which will likely lead to increased recidivism for incarcerated people. The Senate unanimously adopted the Martha Wright Reed Act in 2022 to lower rates and the Commission implemented that law in 2024. When the FCC proposed the changes in October, members of this committee denounced Chair Carr's rolling back the implementation of the Martha Wright Act.¹² The law passed out of Congress on a bipartisan basis, and the FCC's 2024 Final Rule (2024 Rule) was adopted on a 5-0 vote. Recent analysis of the FCC's changes found that they would lead to a 66 percent drop in call minutes, and the rates people would pay will increase by as much as 83 percent - costing consumers hundreds of millions of dollars annually.¹³ We urge Chair Carr to roll back the changes made and enforce the 2024 Rule as originally adopted by the Commission.

Aiding Ban on State and Local AI Laws: Chair Carr previously stated that he would be taking a look at how "the FCC may be able to play a role in helping" block state laws regulating artificial intelligence,¹⁴ and the FCC has followed up the Chair's comments by issuing two notices seeking to ban enforcement of state laws regulating AI.¹⁵ While the Chair may be eager to assist the White House in these efforts, the Communications Act does not grant the FCC authority over artificial intelligence, and it does not have the power to preempt state AI law.¹⁶ Further, public polling has made clear that the public wants more regulation of AI, not less.¹⁷

We stand ready to work with Congress on policies that will protect civil rights, prevent unlawful discrimination, and advance equal opportunity. Should you require further information or have any

¹⁰ Inside Radio, Commissioner Urges Private Companies to Fight FCC Efforts to End DEI, (March 26, 2025), https://www.insideradio.com/free/commissioner-urges-private-companies-to-fight-fcc-efforts-to-end-dei/article_4be2f10e-9b92-46b7-9b0f-e70f019c54ed.html.

¹¹ Open Letter from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights to Leaders in Business, Philanthropy, Education, Law, Non-Profits, and Health Care (May 16, 2025), <https://civilrights.org/resource/your-civil-rights-obligations-remain-in-force/>.

¹² Press Release, Senator Tammy Duckworth, Duckworth Leads Colleagues in Denouncing FCC Chair Brendan Carr's Unlawful Plan to Increase Costs for Law Abiding Americans with Incarcerated Loved Ones (Oct. 28, 2025), <https://www.duckworth.senate.gov/news/press-releases/duckworth-leads-colleagues-in-denouncing-fcc-chair-brendan-carrs-unlawful-plan-to-increase-costs-for-law-abiding-americans-with-incarcerated-loved-ones>.

¹³ Press Release, Worth Rises, Worth Rises Releases Impact Analysis of the FCC's Proposed Revisions to Its 2024 Regulations on Incarcerated People's Communications Services and Rebukes the Revisions as Overly Broad and Misguided (Oct. 15, 2025), <https://worthrises.org/pressreleases/2025/10/15/worth-rises-releases-impact-analysis-of-the-fccs-proposed-revisions>.

¹⁴ Chris Teale, "FCC Chair Floats Preempting State AI Laws," Route Fifty (Sept 30, 2025), <https://www.route-fifty.com/artificial-intelligence/2025/09/fcc-chair-floats-preempting-state-ai-laws/408472/>.

¹⁵ Austin Bonner and Alex Tate, "FCC Kicks Off AI Action Plan Efforts," HWG (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://hwglaw.com/2025/10/01/fcc-kicks-off-ai-action-plan/>.

¹⁶ Harold Feld, "Can the FCC Preempt State Laws on AI? No - Especially Not With Broadband As Title I," Public Knowledge (Sept. 19, 2025), <https://publicknowledge.org/can-the-fcc-preempt-state-laws-on-ai-no/>.

¹⁷ Benedict Vigers and Justin Lall, "Americans Prioritize AI Safety and Data Security," Gallup (Sept. 16, 2025), <https://news.gallup.com/poll/694685/americans-prioritize-safety-data-security.aspx>.



January 14, 2026
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questions regarding this issue, please feel free to contact Jonathan Walter, senior policy counsel, at walter@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
UnidosUS
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC
Common Cause
Communications Workers of America
Hispanic Federation
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)
National Action Network
National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA)
National Council of Negro Women (NCNW)
National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of its low-income clients
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Urban League



ICBE-EMF

Chair

John W. Frank, MD
University of Edinburgh
United Kingdom

Vice Chair

Paul Héroux, PhD
McGill University
Canada

Senior Advisor

Ronald L. Melnick, PhD
Former U.S. National
Toxicology Program
USA

Managing Director

Elizabeth Kelley, MA
Electromagnetic Safety
Alliance, Inc.
USA

Commissioners:

Igor Belyaev, PhD
Slovak Academy of Sciences
Slovakia

David Carpenter MD, MPA
University at Albany,
New York, U.S.A.

Prof. Suleyman Dasdag, PhD
Istanbul Medeniyet University
Turkey

Álvaro de Salles, PhD
Federal University of Rio
Grande do Sul (UFRGS)
Brazil

Claudio Fernández Rodríguez,
M.A. Federal Institute of
Education Science and
Technology of Rio Grande do
Sul (IFRS) Brazil

Kavindra Kesari, PhD
Aalto University
Finland

Joel M. Moskowitz, PhD
University of California,
Berkeley, USA

Igor Yakymenko PhD
Department of Public Health at
Kyiv Medical University
Ukraine

To: Hon. Brett Guthrie, Chair

House Committee on Energy & Commerce

Hon. Frank Pallone, Ranking Member

House Committee on Energy & Commerce

Hon. Richard Hudson, Chair

House Subcommittee on Communications &
Technology

Hon. Doris Matsui, Ranking Member

House Subcommittee on Communications &
Technology

Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce

U.S. House of Representatives
2113 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

January 12, 2026

**Re: Oversight Hearing of the Federal Communications Commission
on January 14, 2026**

Dear Chairman Brett Guthrie and Ranking Member Frank Pallone Jr.,
Chairman Hudson, Ranking Member Matsui, and Members of the
Committee,

We write to you as experts of the International Commission on the
Biological Effects of Electromagnetic Fields (ICBE-EMF), an
international consortium of scientists, doctors, and researchers with
extensive expertise and peer-reviewed publications on the biological and
health effects of non-ionizing electromagnetic fields, including the
radiofrequency (RF) radiation emitted by cell towers and 4G/5G
infrastructure.

Alasdair Philips, B.Sc., Eng.,
MIEEE
United Kingdom

Special Experts:

Fiorella Belpoggi PhD
Emerita Scientific
Director, Ramazzini Institute,
Bologna, Italy

Kent Chamberlin PhD
Past-Chair, Professor Emeritus
in the Department of Electrical
and Computer Engineering,
University of New Hampshire
USA
*Served on the New Hampshire
State Commission on 5G*

Lennart Hardell MD, PhD
The Environment and Cancer
Research Foundation
Sweden

Martha Herbert, MD, PhD
Pediatric Neurologist,
Neuroscientist
USA

Don Maisch, PhD
Tasmania, Australia

Erica Mallery-Blythe BSBM
Physicians' Health Initiative
for Radiation and
Environment
United Kingdom

Albert M. Manville, II, PhD
Former branch chief, Division
of Migratory Bird
Management, U.S. Fish &
Wildlife Service
Environmental Sciences and
Policy Division
Johns Hopkins University
USA

Theodora Scarato MSW
Environmental Health
Sciences
USA

Wenjun Sun, PhD
Zhejiang University's School
of Medicine, Hangzhou
China

We have just submitted our [scientific comments](#) to the FCC opposing its “Build America: Eliminating Barriers to Wireless Deployments” NPRM due to the serious public health and environmental implications, its disregard for established scientific research, and its erosion of democratic, community-based decision-making. In our filing, we told the FCC that cell towers, 5G, and wireless infrastructure should not be fast-tracked as this will increase public exposure to RF radiation, an environmental exposure that peer-reviewed scientific research has associated with numerous health and environmental harms. U.S. limits on allowable exposures to RF radiation, unchanged since 1996, are not science-based and do not protect the public.

We write you to request that you ask the FCC several questions regarding the FCC’s activities related to cell tower and wireless safety.

As documented by ICBE-EMF, in our paper published in *Environmental Health* entitled “[Scientific evidence invalidates health assumptions underlying the FCC and ICNIRP exposure limit determinations for radiofrequency radiation: implications for 5G](#),” FCC’s RF radiation exposure guidelines ignore decades of peer-reviewed research showing biological harm at levels far below those that cause heating.¹ The FCC’s outdated 1996 limits are based on scientifically unsupported assumptions, focusing only on short-term heating effects while ignoring the extensive peer-reviewed published scientific evidence of biological harm at lower, non-heating levels. The FCC’s 1996 limits were derived almost entirely from short-term behavioral disruption studies in animals, such as heat-induced changes in behavior and the limits do not account for chronic exposure or the pulse-modulated signals transmitted by wireless technologies. Further, despite a federal court order²³ to explain how its limits are adequately protective, FCC limits have not been updated based upon a comprehensive review of the current scientific evidence on cellular, neurological, reproductive, or carcinogenic effects. Thus, they do not account for long-term health effects, children's vulnerability, electromagnetic hypersensitivity, cumulative exposures, or the documented impacts on wildlife and ecosystems.

A rapidly expanding body of peer-reviewed research demonstrates that RF radiation from wireless infrastructure, including cellular towers and 5G small cell towers, can produce harmful effects at levels far below current FCC limits.^{4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11}

Large-scale animal research, including the U.S. National Toxicology Program (NTP) and Ramazzini Institute studies, both found increased brain and heart tumors.^{12,13} Notably, the Ramazzini Institute (RI) used much lower RF radiation levels as compared to the NTP, with RF levels that were lower than the FCC limit for cell tower emissions. Further, the same types of tumors reported in the NTP and RI studies have also been observed in human studies,^{14,15} adding significant confidence that the associations observed in human studies are real.^{16,17} Studies of people living near cell towers show increased biomarkers of DNA damage, oxidative stress, hormonal disruption, sleep disturbance, neurological symptoms, and increased cancer rates.^{18,19,20}

The American Academy of Pediatrics has repeatedly urged²¹ the FCC to update its outdated wireless radiation regulations to account for children's increased vulnerability, noting that the research shows children absorb higher rates of RF radiation deeper into their more sensitive brains, as compared to adults.^{22,23} Further, research has also documented that cell phone radiation exposure can exceed limits when the phone is close to the body,^{24,25} and that Wi-Fi and cell towers can increase children's exposure in schools.^{26,27}

Further, the FCC plan puts wildlife at risk. The FCC has not established guidelines to protect non-human species from RF radiation even though there is a large and growing body of evidence that demonstrates the biological effects of RF radiation on animals and plants.^{28,29,30,31,32}

We caution that the FCC's proposed changes will come at a serious cost to public health and the environment, as well as strip state and local government authority.

In 2021, the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals issued a remand order on the FCC RF radiation emission limits, requiring it to provide a reasoned explanation for not updating its RF radiation emission limits, which were last set in 1996, when only a fraction of the cell towers and cell phones that we have today existed. The order stated that the FCC had failed to respond to "record evidence that exposure to RF radiation at levels below the Commission's current limits may cause negative health effects unrelated to cancer." The Court ordered the FCC to examine the effects of long-term exposure to humans and the environment, particularly to children. To date, the FCC has not complied.

The FCC's reliance on Section 704 of the Telecommunications Act to preempt local consideration of environmental and health impacts is unjustified because the Commission has not conducted any meaningful review of RF radiation effects, nor ensured that any federal agency is doing so. Without updated safety limits or an up-to-date current scientific evaluation, how can the FCC continue to claim that health and environmental impacts may not be considered by local governments when considering where to place a cell tower? The Commission has failed to perform the very scientific and environmental oversight that Congress presumed when enacting Section 704, and it cannot lawfully claim that state and local governments are barred from considering impacts the FCC itself has never reviewed.

There is not a consensus for wireless safety. The [International EMF Scientist Appeal](#), a petition submitted to the United Nations and signed by more than 260 scientists who have published over 2,000 papers on EMF, biology, and health, states that the current wireless RF radiation human exposure guidelines set by the FCC and other national and international organizations are based on avoiding heating effects and do not adequately protect against known health risks that do not involve heat that can cause long-term health risks.³³³⁴ The science is far from settled, and numerous medical organizations and public health experts recommend reducing exposure as substantial evidence exists pointing to serious risks.³⁵

The FCC's proposal effectively treats American communities as test subjects in an uncontrolled national radiation experiment, one conducted without consent, without monitoring, and without updated safety limits. If the Commission proceeds to fast-track cell towers without revising its outdated 1996 RF radiation exposure limits, it will knowingly promote densification of industrial wireless transmitters and expose millions to cell tower RF radiation levels that multiple peer-reviewed studies associate with increased cancer risk, neurological reproductive harm.

Given the FCC's continued reliance on outdated 1996 cell tower and wireless RF radiation exposure limits and the agency's lack of proper substantive scientific review in the nearly three decades since, we respectfully request clear and direct answers to the following oversight questions.

1. FCC RF exposure limits were set in 1996. What specific scientific review since then has the FCC conducted that justifies treating

those limits as protective for today's chronic cell tower radiation exposures?

2. What evidence does the FCC rely upon to conclude its limits adequately protect children, especially for long-term exposure?
3. In 2021, the D.C Circuit ordered the FCC to provide a reasoned explanation for not updating its wireless RF limits and to address scientific evidence of harm below FCC RF limits, including impacts on children and the environment. What has the FCC done since that remand, and why has it still not updated the limits? Provide the timeline and deliverables regarding the FCC's response to the court.
4. The FCC relies on Section 704 of the Telecom Act to preempt local consideration of health/environmental effects, yet the FCC has not shown it has conducted any meaningful review of the health effects of RF radiation. On what basis can the FCC bar local consideration of impacts the FCC itself has not fully analyzed?
5. In a February 6, 2019, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee hearing on 5G, when industry executives were asked what safety testing has been performed on 5G, wireless industry representatives were asked whether they have supported research on the safety of 5G technology and the industry representatives conceded they have not.³⁶ Then Senator Blumenthal [stated](#), "we're kind of flying blind here" with respect to the health and safety of 5G.³⁷ What has the FCC, FDA and federal agencies done during the past 7 years to assure the American public that 5G and new technologies are safe?
6. What safety testing has been done on 5G and new and emerging technologies to ensure protection for long-term exposures?
7. In light of the increased daily wireless RF radiation exposure to the population, why isn't the FCC recommending policies to monitor and reduce public exposure to RF radiation as many other countries already have done?
8. What incentives does the FCC provide to support R and D for safer technology³⁸ with lower RF emissions?

The public cannot be assured of safety, and Congress cannot exercise its oversight function, without a clear accounting of the scientific basis for continued reliance on decades-old limits that predate modern wireless technologies, chronic exposures, and the ubiquity of RF sources in daily

life. We welcome continued dialogue that could lead to more health protective solutions.

Our experts stand ready to meet with you and provide any additional information or clarification needed to support the fulfillment of the Committee's oversight responsibilities.

Respectfully submitted,

John Frank MD
Chairperson, ICBE-EMF

Ronald L. Melnick PhD
Senior Advisor, ICBE-EMF

Elizabeth Kelley, MA
Managing Director, ICBE-EMF
Management@ICBE-EMF.org

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The Benny Show Podcast September 17, 2025

Benny Johnson (Johnson): Ladies and gentlemen, here to speak authoritatively on this issue is the chairman of the FCC, Brendan Carr, joining us live now. Mr. Chairman, thank you so much for being on our program. This is something that obviously is concerned, a great many number of people, about Jimmy Kimmel's monologue. What does the FCC's stance on this? Certainly is a heightened moment in American history where you do not want to see copycats, you do not want to see further radicalization, but by slandering and maligning and distorting what happened to Charlie Kirk, Jimmy Kimmel seems to be inviting it.

Chairman Brendan Carr (Carr): First of all, Benny, I don't think you and I haven't had a chance to talk yet since Charlie Kirk's death and I think I just want to join everything you've been saying about Charlie, his life, an amazing man. I think what was so revealing in the last few days is, I think what dawned on so many people is that everyone I think knew that Charlie Kirk had said something kind to them, had lifted them up when they were either a low point in their career or at no point in their career. And when you saw so many people conveying their stories with Charlie, you saw a sort of a connection across hundreds and thousands of people that you knew he meant something to you, but you didn't know that he had somehow found the capacity to be that sort of meaningful inspiration for so many people. I think that's why there's sort of a dawning on people and a reflection in the last couple of days that's been so meaningful to see. You know, when you look at the conduct that has taken place by Jimmy Kimmel, it appears to be some of the sickest conduct possible. As you've indicated, there are, you know, avenues here for the FCC, so there are some ways in which I need to be a little bit careful, because we could be called ultimately to be a judge on some of these claims that come up, but I don't think this is an isolated incident. I mean, you go back to Representative Swalwell, and he had a tweet out last week where he was saying that, you know, emphasizing that Charlie Kirk's killer was a straight white male from a Republican family that voted for Trump. In some quarters, there's a very concerted effort to try to lie to the American people about the nature, as you indicated, one of the most significant newsworthy public interest acts that we've seen in a long time. And what appears to be an action, appears to be an action, by Jimmy Kimmel to play into that narrative that this was somehow a MAGA or Republican motivated person. If that's what happened here with his conduct, that is really, really sick. And I've been very clear from the moment that I have become chairman of the FCC, I want to reinvigorate the public interest. And what people don't understand is that the broadcasters, and you've gotten this right, are entirely different than people that use other forms of communication. They have a license

granted by us at the FCC, and if that comes with it, an obligation to operate in the public interest. And we can get into some ways that we've been trying to reinvigorate the public interest and some changes that we've seen. But frankly, when you see stuff like this, I mean, look, we can do this the easy way or the hard way. These companies can find ways to change conduct, to take action, frankly, on Kimmel, or, you know, there's going to be additional work for the FCC ahead.

Johnson: What kind of action would you see? At the very least, I would like to have an on air apology from Jimmy Kimmel to the Kirk family, to all of those who he slandered because he did say that Charlie Kirk, he is effectively saying that our movement did this, our movement killed Charlie, that Charlie was deserving of this effectively. And we've seen that rear its head. This happens quite regularly, actually, on MSNBC and on other networks, where they're trying to victim blame. And what that does, Mr. Chairman, respectfully, is continues the lie and continues the threat level to say effectively that we have no share in this problem at all on the left. This is a clear-cut case. What would you like to see done at ABC?

Carr: Well, look, I think what you said there strikes me as a very reasonable minimal step that can be taken. I mean, obviously, look, there's calls for Kim will be fired. I think, you know, you could certainly see a path forward for suspension over this. And again, you know, the FCC is gonna have remedies that we could look at. And again, you know, we may ultimately be called to be a judge on that. But this also strikes me as sort of conduct that to some extent shows some sort of desperate irrelevance. I mean, we're sort of exiting an era where the three main broadcast legacy broadcast networks could control and dictate the narrative to the American people. And one of the things that President Trump did when he ran for office, he ran directly at that legacy media establishment. He smashed the façade that they get to control what we say, what we think, the narrative around events. And we're seeing a lot of consequences that are flowing from President Trump doing that. I mean, look, NPR has been defunded, PBS has been defunded, Colbert is retiring, Joy Reid is out at MSNBC, Terry Moran has gone from ABC and is now admitting that they are biased. CBS has now made some commitments to us that they're going to return to more fact-based journalism. And so I think you see some lashing out from people like Kimmel who are, frankly, talentless and are looking for ways to get attention. But, you know, their grip on the narrative is slipping. That doesn't mean that it's still not, you know, important to hold in the public interest standard. That's what we're going to have to do.

Johnson: So we did elucidate and enumerate a number of statutes that could be used against ABC. If you would, Mr. Chairman, would you just explain for us what broadcasting in

the public interest means? I don't think most people understand actually the depth of how important it is that ABC, NBC, CBS have these gratuitous broadcast privileges granted to them by the American taxpayer.

Carr: Yeah, the right way to sort of explain this to people so they understand it is in the media landscape as relevant here, there's two main buckets of actors. One, you've got what we call national programmers. That's what Comcast is, Comcast NBC, that's what Disney is, Disney ABC. They're the ones that effectively create and produce these shows. They then provide those shows to individually licensed TV stations. Those TV stations are in the main owned by independent companies, independent from Comcast and Disney. But Disney and Comcast both own some televisions themselves. So start from the idea that you have national programmers that create the show, including The Kimmel Show, and then they're given to and distributed over licensed TV stations. It's the licensed TV stations that have the public interest standard, including those TV stations that Comcast and Disney own. So FCC regulatory action focuses on those individual stations. And one thing that we're trying to do is to empower those local stations to serve their own communities. And the public interest means you can't be running a narrow, partisan circus and still meeting your public interest obligations. It means you can't be engaging in a pattern of news distortion. We have a rule on the book that interprets a public interest standard that says news distortion is something that is prohibited. Likewise, we have a rule that addresses broadcast hoaxes. And so, again, over the years, the FCC has stepped back from enforcing it. And I don't think it's been to the benefit of anybody. Just look at the credibility of this legacy media. It's absolutely through the floor. They used to be able to say at least they were more trustworthy than Congress, but now they're even less trustworthy than Congress. And so I think as a business matter for them, something has to change. And at the FCC, we need to reinvigorate this. So again, there's actions that we can take on licensed broadcasters. And frankly, I think that it's really sort of past time that a lot of these licensed broadcasters themselves push back on Comcast and Disney and say, listen, we are going to preempt. We are not going to run Kimmel anymore until you straighten this out, because we, we licensed broadcasters, are running the possibility of fines or license revocation from the FCC if we continue to run content that ends up being a pattern of news distortion. So I think, again, Disney needs to see some change here, but the individual licensed stations that are taking their content, it's time for them to step up and say, this garbage, to the extent that that's what comes down the pipe in the future, isn't something that we think serves the needs of our local communities. But this sort of status quo is obviously not acceptable where we are.

Johnson: Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for explaining it that way because I don't think that a lot of people quite understand the regulatory nightmare that a company like Disney is under in a situation like this. Because you have one, you have the company Disney, that obviously appeals and markets to children in a constant basis, and they are having one of their companies that they own, that is now maligning a hero of so many of those kids. Charlie Kirk was a Gen Z hero, and so many of those kids that were raised on Disney and Disney products, looked up to Charlie, looked up to Charlie, and to lie about his death and to not be forthright about the forces that killed him culturally, and that threaten other children, obviously, on a day-to-day basis, as we are constantly seeing, is a massive liability. Disney should get very serious about threats to children.

Carr: Yeah, I mean, Disney's got a lot of trouble. I mean, look, we've launched, I don't know if we've talked about this publicly yet, but we have launched, have launched, and are continuing to run an investigation into Disney for their DEI practices for potentially violating the FCC's equal employment opportunity rules. We've issued Disney a letter of inquiry on that. We've received some documents from them. Again, we haven't talked, I don't think publicly about that before, but that is a very active investigation that's underway into Disney on that conduct. And again, it's your point. I mean, step back for a second. But if the public interest means anything, if we're going to enforce this thing, I mean, just look at the number of hoaxes that have been run on the American people with the aid of a lot of these broadcasters. You've got, you know, you've got this, you know, the whips at the border store. You've got Covington Catholic. You've got Juicy Smollett. You've got Hunter Biden's laptop. You've got, you know, Joe Biden is sharp as a tack. You've got, you know, fake stories about hospitals being overrun by ivermectin overdoses and therefore people dying of gunshots, mostly peaceful protests. I mean, the list goes on and on and on. And again, I think whether it's the FCC through our public interest enforcement actions, whether it's as a business matter, these people need to sort of change course or frankly, the fact that they're increasingly irrelevant because President Trump has run right at them. Most politicians that just said, okay, I'll accept the narrative that mainstream media is pushing and President Trump hasn't done that. And frankly, I think not that there's a great part of the de-platforming of conservatives, but if there is any silver lining that I mean, look at what you built, look at what Charlie built. Republicans, conservatives were forced to build alternate channels of reaching out directly to the American consumer and you are winning the battle of ideas by doing that and the legacy media is struggling and they're lashing out.

Johnson: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for saying that. Obviously, that is what made Charlie so profoundly powerful is his capacity to reach directly to the millions of grassroots supporters and then also to reach physically those supporters at large scale events, many

of which we were at together. And those are the kind of things that made him, he was able to do an end round, the gatekeepers that typically would keep someone like Charlie from ever having an audience. It actually is a remarkable moment. It's what made him frankly so dangerous to so many that wanted to see his life cut short. To honor his memory, we thank you for ensuring that the FCC is going to be enforcing these rules. A final question to you, do you believe that what Jimmy Kimmel said rises to the level of news distortion?

Carr: Look, again, the FCC could be called upon to be an ultimate judge in that, but at this point, I think it's clear, it appears to be clear, that you could make a strong argument that this is sort of an intentional effort to mislead the American people about a very core, fundamental fact, a very important matter. At the end of the day, if we do get called upon to cast a vote on this, Disney will have a chance to put in their arguments and explain it, but this is a very, very serious issue right now for Disney.

Johnson: Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Please follow Chairman Brendan Carr here on X, the Federal Communications Commission Chairman.



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POLITICS

How an AM radio station in California weathered the Trump administration's assault on media

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Updated 8:29 AM EST, December 15, 2025

Before [Jimmy Kimmel](#), there was KCBS.

Just six days into President Donald Trump's new administration, the San Francisco Bay-area radio station KCBS-AM reported that immigration agents were in the area — driving “unmarked vehicles including a black Dodge Durango, a gray Nissan Maxima and white Nissan truck.”

The brief story — also reported by other outlets — quickly drew the ire of conservative influencers who attacked KCBS' report as endangering agents' lives, sparking a deluge of complaints from listeners and callers.

That was just the start of KCBS' troubles. The Trump administration's top broadcast regulator, [Brendan Carr](#), soon accused KCBS of failing to operate in the public interest and said he was opening an investigation.

By targeting KCBS, Carr revealed his willingness to expand the Republican administration's offensive on perceived media foes beyond major broadcasters like ABC, CBS and NPR. In KCBS' case, the radio station took steps to mitigate the potential of drawing further attention from conservative influencers. The chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, according to eight current and former employees who insisted on anonymity out of fear of reprisal.

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KCBS demoted a well-liked anchor and dialed back on political programming, people said. For months, reporters were dissuaded from pursuing political or controversial topics and instead encouraged to focus on human interest stories, according to the current and former staffers.

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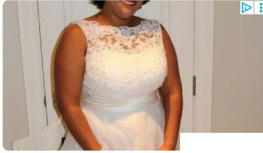
When journalists were given permission to pursue politics or Trump administration policies, some of the staffers said, the tone of the stories was heavily scrutinized.

Doug Sovern, a veteran political journalist at the station, said he was sidelined after Carr's investigation.

"'Chilling effect' does not begin to describe the neutering of our political coverage," said Carr in April. He said his retirement was not related to the controversy.

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FCC scrutiny has eased in recent months, and the station has been increasingly willing to tackle more topics that might draw attention from the administration and conservative critics, the staffers said. The station, for example, assigned a reporter in October to cover [the No Kings Day protests](#) of the Trump administration, which the staffers described as a welcome change.

In a statement, KCBS said it would not “comment on internal personnel matters.”

“There has been no change in policy or editorial direction at KCBS,” the station added. “We remain committed to providing our Bay Area listeners with trusted news, including our political coverage, that is balanced and objective.”

The FCC did not respond to a request for comment.

Trump's enforcer

In Trump's second term, Carr has emerged as a top enforcer of Trump's agenda, using his perch to take on one of the president's [favorite targets: media outlets](#).

His threat to ABC in September that “we can do this the easy way or the hard way” led to Kimmel, a late-night host and comedian, being briefly pulled off the air by parent company Disney over [statements in one of his monologues](#) about the political reaction to the slaying of Charlie Kirk, a conservative activist. ABC and CBS settled what some experts said were long-shot libel lawsuits by Trump at the same time their parent companies had significant interests before the FCC. NPR and PBS affiliates came under scrutiny over whether they were crossing the line into commercial advertising.

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When the FCC later approved a merger involving CBS' parent company, the network's new owners committed to making “significant changes” at the broadcast network — a move the FCC approved in his statement approving the deal. And in November, Carr reshared a Trump social media post calling comedian Seth Meyers to be fired from NBC.



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Al Sikes, a Republican former FCC chairman who served under President George H.W. Bush, said Carr was using "mobster" tactics.

"What we're seeing right now is new boundaries that are being set on the exercise of authority: punishing those that you don't like and ensconcing those that you do," Sikes said in an interview.

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ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS and NPR did not respond to requests for comment.

Since February, the White House has [blocked The Associated Press' access](#) to events after the wire service said it would continue referring to the Gulf of Mexico in some of its copy. Trump had signed an executive order renaming the body of water the Gulf of America. The AP filed suit over the restrictions, and a federal judge ordered the White House in April to restore the AP's full access to cover presidential events as part of the press pool. The judge's order was put on hold while the White House appeals it.

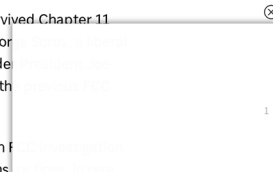
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KCBS in the crosshairs

KCBS has a storied history. It was one of the earliest radio stations ever licensed. Owned by CBS for nearly 70 years, it helped pioneer the 24-hour news radio format. CBS sold its radio properties in 2017 to Entercom, which later renamed itself Audacy. KCBS remains a broadcast affiliate of CBS News Radio.

The proliferation of digital content has hit the radio industry hard. Audacy recently survived [Chapter 11](#) bankruptcy and had only been saved by a major investment from a firm owned by George Soros, a liberal donor and frequent Republican target. That investment was approved by the FCC under [Chairman Ajit Pai](#) in Biden's Democratic administration. Some conservatives, including Carr, had criticized the FCC's leadership for failing to scrutinize the deal more closely.

In going after KCBS, Carr relied on a letter of inquiry, the first formal step in opening an [FCC investigation](#). Broadcasters are regulated by the agency, and it has the authority to issue admonitions, [fines](#) and, in some cases, it can revoke broadcast licenses.



After Carr's threat, staffers involved in the story were summoned to meetings with lawyers hired by Audacy. The attorneys scoured employee social media posts and grilled some on whether they had any political bias, current and former staff said.

The station's news director, Jennifer Seelig, sits on the board of the Radio Television Digital News Association, which gives out a prominent First Amendment award. She told people that business considerations required the station to avoid angering the FCC, current and former staffers said.

Seelig did not respond to requests for an interview.

Veteran reporter demoted

Bret Burkhart, who first read the report on the immigration action over the air, was demoted from his anchor position to a less prestigious reporting gig. After a few months, he left the station for a new job, according to current and former staffers. Burkhart was a well-regarded Bay Area radio personality, with more than a dozen top journalism awards over the course of his long career.

Burkhart's colleagues were perplexed that the station would discipline anyone for reporting on the raids, especially because the federal agents were not operating undercover and the information they based the report on came from several local politicians.

The description of immigration agents in unmarked cars "is newsworthy, particularly since Trump's administration has a history of sending in federal agents while disguising what agencies they're with," said Mark Feldstein, a journalism professor at the University of Maryland and former on-air correspondent at CNN and ABC.

Sovern, an award-winning political reporter who worked for The New York Times and the AP, said he struggled to get stories published.

In the weeks after the immigration story, Seelig asked Sovren to cancel an interview he had set up with California gubernatorial candidate Katie Porter out of fear she would say something negative about Trump, he said.

"I'm disappointed that a news organization once renowned and acclaimed for its diligent pursuit of the truth, no matter where it led and no matter whose feathers it ruffled, backed away from its core mission out of fear and economic insecurity," Sovren said. "That's not the KCBS I knew, and gave 35 years of my professional life to, and it's a shame the last months had to end in such ignoble fashion."

AP writers Brian Slodysko and Michael Biesecker contributed reporting.

BYRON TAU

Tau is an investigative reporter in the Washington, D.C. bureau of the Associated Press. He focuses on reporting stories about national security, law enforcement, technology and government accountability. He can be reached on Signal at byrontau.01



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"What better way to reassure Hispanics in South Florida that Democrats are totally not like the regimes they fled than to summon the full power of the federal government against a privately-held opposition media outlet?"

By **Luke Rosiak**

Apr 16, 2021 DailyWire.com



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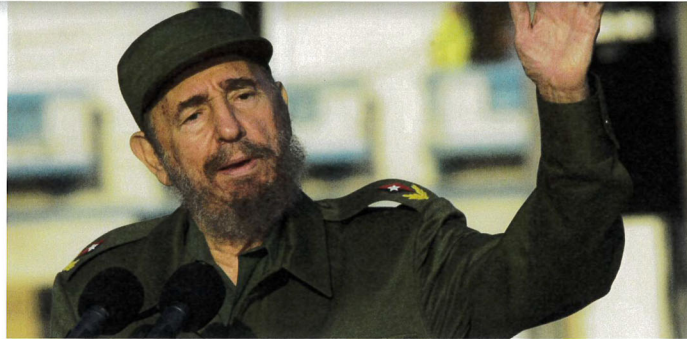
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Jorge Rey/Getty Images

After Republicans increased their share of the Hispanic vote in 2020, Congressional Democrats are clamoring to use the force of government to prevent Latinos from hearing conservative ideas.

Multiple members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), including Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ), the chair of its political arm, want the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to block the sale of a Miami Spanish-language radio station to a company they believe will move its programming from a left-wing to a right-wing slant.

America CV, a Spanish-language media company, announced that it was buying Caracol 1260 AM this month. Soon after, it said it would change the station's name to America Radio and replaced Raul Martinez, a liberal talk show host and former government official, Newsweek reported.

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will not apologize for promoting democracy and opposing the Castro regime because we represent a community who are victims of that regime.”

Gallego lamented that Hispanics might vote Republican since those who preferred to consume media in the Spanish language did not watch CNN.

“For a lot of these communities this is the only source they watch, a lot of them aren’t crossing over and watching other media like CNN, so they end up being siloed in terms of the information they get. They only go to the trusted source so when that source gets corrupted, you essentially have a population getting one point of view,” he told Newsweek.

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The two best-known sources of Spanish-language news, Univision and Telemundo, already provide a notoriously leftist viewpoint. Univision this month described moves towards Democrats’ scorched-earth plan to pack the supreme court as Joe Biden “keeping his campaign promise to unite a divided nation.”

Gallego asked the broader CHC to support his bid to ask the FCC to block the transfer. Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX) told Newsweek it would be “wise” for the FCC to look at the sale.

But Jorge Bonilla, director of MRC Latino, a watchdog group that focuses on Hispanic media, said the use of government powers to silence



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"What better way to reassure Hispanics in South Florida that Democrats are totally not like the regimes they fled than to summon the full power of the federal government against a privately-held opposition media outlet? Hugo Chávez would be proud," he told The Daily Wire.

Rep. Darren Soto, a Florida Democrat, implied that Hispanics voted Republican because they had been tricked by Spanish-language media, telling Newsweek the sale "could further make South Florida vulnerable to the sophisticated Spanish-language misinformation campaigns perpetrated during the 2020 election. The 'Big Lie' about the 2020 elections, which was amplified on similar stations, has damaged this country severely already."

"The FCC should scrutinize this sale," he said.

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Florida is a swing state with an electorate that is approximately 19% Hispanic. Cuban-Americans, many of whom saw the effects of far-left politics first-hand under the Fidel Castro regime, have long been a strong conservative presence.

Many voters from Latin American countries beyond Cuba increasingly



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Those include Americans with heritage in Nicaragua, which was the site of the Sandanista revolution; Venezuela, whose economy has cratered under socialism; and Colombia, which is a conservative-leaning country that endured Marxist guerrillas for decades.

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Miami-Dade County, which is 69% Hispanic, voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton by 30 points in 2016 but went for Democrat Joe Biden by a margin of only 7 points in 2020.

Martinez, the talk show host who was a reliable voice for progressive messages and who was fired, had a trail of allegations that might feel familiar to those fleeing corrupt countries.

As mayor of the city of Hialeah, a heavily Hispanic blue-collar municipality outside of Miami, in the 1980s and 1990s, Martinez's campaign workers "recruited mentally incapacitated people to cast absentee ballots," the Sun-Sentinel reported. He was convicted of racketeering and extortion in 1991, but the convictions were later overturned.

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blows to the body” as a police officer restrained the mayor, the Sun-Sentinel reported. Prosecutors dropped charges.

Though Hispanics are America’s largest minority group and come from countries with a wide variety of cultures and beliefs, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC), a nominally nonpartisan group for lawmakers of that ethnic background, consists of only Democrats.

In 2017, the CHC refused to allow Rep. Carlos Curbelo, a Miami-area lawmaker who was the son of Cuban exiles and “advocated on behalf of undocumented immigrant youth,” to join. Curbelo is a Republican.

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The CHC said at the time that it “isn’t just an organization for Hispanics; it is a caucus that represents certain values. This vote reflects the position of many of our members that Rep. Curbelo and his record are not consistent with those values.”

Curbelo replied, “I will not allow their bigotry and discrimination and penchant for segregation to hurt the young people they claim they want to help and I certainly want to help.”

CHC spokesperson Alex Sarabia did not immediately return questions from The Daily Wire on its current criteria for membership, and how an all-Democrat Hispanic Caucus can faithfully represent Hispanic-Americans with diverse beliefs. She also did not reply to a question about



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A mismatch between ethnic groups and the megaphones that purport to speak for them has increasingly been on display.

In California in 2020, prominent nonprofits ostensibly representing Hispanics backed Proposition 16, a ballot initiative that would legalize affirmative action, even as polling showed that most individual Hispanics did not support it. All of California's majority-Hispanic counties ultimately voted against it at the ballot box, and the measure failed.

The same tension has been evidenced with Asians. A group called Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) aggressively promoted Proposition 16 even though Asians could be the primary losers of such a measure, with their admission to prestigious universities being sharply curtailed.

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Polling showed that Asian voters helped defeat the proposition. An anti-Prop 16 activist, Wenyan Wu, likened CAA to an astroturf group that "advances the ideological agenda of the groups behind the initiative."

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Response to Submitted Questions for the Record

Chairman Brendan Carr

Federal Communications Commission

“Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission”

Subcommittee on Communications and Technology of the United States House

Of Representatives Committee On Energy And Commerce

January 14, 2026

Attachment —Additional Questions for the Record**The Honorable Rick Allen**

1. I understand the Commission is currently looking at alternatives for PNT systems that could be used to provide redundancy, something I support. Could you tell us what the current timeline is for that petition and whether you are also taking into account any potential negative impacts these alternatives could have on existing technologies that also utilize wireless spectrum?

Answer: As you referenced, the FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry in March 2025 to start building the record to understand what alternatives are out there and weigh the various pros and cons, as well as anticipate any of the consequences. Each of the various GPS alternatives will require different levels of coordination with unique groups of stakeholders. The NOI has given potentially impacted parties the opportunity to weigh in on how to work together to mitigate unintended consequences.

2. Existing licensed and unlicensed users in the Lower 900 MHz band (902-928 MHz) argue that NextNav's proposed high-power 5G-based PNT system would cause unacceptable interference. What specific, independent technical analysis has the FCC conducted to verify NextNav's claims that its high-power 5G-based PNT system will not cause harmful interference to incumbent users, particularly critical infrastructure and Part 15 devices (particularly in the logistics, retail and security space)?

Answer: Commenters from all sides of the issue have submitted various technical studies in the record. The FCC will continue to review the record in this proceeding. No final decisions have been made.

3. I am committed to finding policy solutions to eliminate the scourge of robocalls and robotexts on consumers, which at the least are annoying but at their worst ripe for fraud and deception. As Congress looks at every angle of this issue, the Commission's efforts in examining transitioning to all-IP networks, if implemented correctly, may assist in this endeavor. I encourage the Commission to take into consideration delays caused by ILECs' resistance to an all-IP transition due to current practices of requiring IP-capable competitors to interconnect through outdated TDM tandem facilities (and charging anti-competitive or unreasonable amounts in TDM interconnection fees in the process), contributing to uncompetitive market-place practices, and unnecessary reliance on outdated technology, which ultimately affect consumers and allow the incessant issue of robocalls to persist. Will you commit to holding ILECs accountable for any uncompetitive practices identified on this issue and specifically review the ways all-IP carriers are forced to engage with ILECs on the issue?

Answer: The issue the FCC hears about the most through consumer complaints is illegal robocalls. This is why combating robocalls is a top consumer protection priority for me as Chairman. We have started a new campaign to tackle illegal robocalls at every point in the call path. As part of this approach, we have taken action to strengthen caller ID

authentication, to increase enforcement of our rules to make sure every provider doing business in the U.S. takes proactive steps to mitigate robocalls, and we have been exploring ways to hold providers accountable when they serve as gateways for illegal traffic. And we are not slowing down.

You are right that the Commission's work on accelerating the IP transition intersects with these efforts. Legacy TDM infrastructure was not built with today's authentication and analytics tools in mind. By contrast, IP-based networks enable more robust deployment of STIR/SHAKEN authentication, better call analytics, and faster traceback. Modernizing our rules to facilitate an efficient IP transition can therefore strengthen our robocall enforcement framework.

If outdated interconnection practices are forcing IP-capable carriers to route traffic through legacy TDM tandem facilities, the FCC will examine this carefully. And we will facilitate greater lines of communication between ILECs and all-IP carriers as we continue our work to advance the transition.

The Honorable Robert E. Latta

1. Will you work to incorporate policies successfully utilized in previous auctions which promote equitable access to spectrum, including through reasonable aggregation policies, appropriate reserve prices, sufficiently small license sizes, appropriate power levels, bidding credits, and other tools which may benefit rural areas?

Answer: The FCC seeks comment ahead of each auction to ensure that its spectrum policies promote the public interest, including benefiting the many rural parts of the country.

2. The FCC has made great strides in modernizing outdated rules to speed up deployment. Unfortunately, legacy FCC systems like the Universal Licensing System and Antenna Structure Registration program are still reliant on outdated servers and software with significant downtimes, making it difficult for industry to file and modify important information necessary for deployment. What is the overall timeline for the Commission to update and modernize ULS/ASR and do you need anything from Congress to complete the update?

Answer: The FCC is actively working to modernize our online databases. This effort includes replacing outdated infrastructure and improving reliability.

The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith

1. It is my understanding that the Commission is examining state and local permitting practices and that some broadband providers have been denied permission to deploy internet infrastructure because of either express, or *de facto*, state and local *moratoria* on construction. I know the Commission previously found that *moratoria* violate Section 253 of

the Communications Act. What can the Commission do to counter overbearing state and local barriers that the Commission determines are unlawful?

Answer: The FCC currently has rulemakings underway exploring more ways to prevent overbearing state and local barriers from harming deployment. These barriers slow down and, in some cases, stop deployment of infrastructure that has major benefits for the surrounding communities.

2. What existing authorities does the Commission already possess to prevent program producers from shutting out so-called “independent programmers” on cable television?

Answer: Section 616 of the Act (47 USC § 536) and the program carriage rules that the Commission adopted to implement section 616 (47 CFR §§ 76.1300-1302) are existing authorities that the Commission has to prevent cable television providers and other multichannel video programming distributors from discriminating against independent programmers.

- a. Are those authorities being exercised by the Commission or are they largely dormant?

Answer: The Commission exercises this authority when warranted. Under the Communications Act, an independent programmer must show that the multichannel video programming distributor treated the independent programmer differently than the multichannel video programming distributor treated an affiliated programmer.

3. What can be done to improve market access for independent cable television program producers?

Answer: Large mainstream media conglomerates and technology companies have too much market power. The FCC needs to hold the mainstream media conglomerates holding broadcast licenses accountable by making sure that their stations operate in the public interest as required by the Communications Act.

4. The Federal Communications Commission is considering changes to the sharing framework designed to protect geostationary orbit satellites (GSOs) from interference from non-geostationary orbit satellites (NGSOs). Some GSO owners are concerned that this sharing framework could cause harmful interference for the subscribers who rely on them. This could mean that satellite television subscribers would experience significantly increased incidences of picture interruption and distortion as they attempt to watch programming. How is the Commission ensuring that satellite television subscribers are protected?

Answer: The FCC will continue to review the record on this issue to ensure the right outcome, including for satellite television subscribers.

The Honorable Gus Bilirakis

1. In light of the growing and diverse marketplace, what opportunities/risks are there for local independent media companies? And are there any actions that the FCC can take to foster these local voices?

Answer: One of my major initiatives at the Commission is to empower local broadcasters by promoting local news, local reporting, and local journalism. I am doing this by holding broadcasters accountable to their public interest obligations to meet the needs of their communities of license; re-examining the relationship between the national networks and the local television stations; unleashing new voices over the airwaves through our licensing process; and removing outdated broadcast regulations. I believe these efforts will promote local news in communities across the country.

The Honorable Russ Fulcher

1. I want to discuss the importance of wireless deployment in rural, unserved, and under-served areas such as the area I represent. What can we do to ensure that these communities have access to mobile broadband?

Answer: Restoring spectrum auction authority in the Working Families Tax Cut Act was an important and substantive step in getting mobile broadband out to rural, unserved, and under-served areas. The FCC now has several workstreams under way to auction new spectrum bands that can be put to use across the country. And the FCC is facilitating secondary market transactions that can do the same thing. The Commission under my leadership is also working to enable providers to offer more robust direct-to-cell service from satellites, which would boost mobile broadband in these areas.

2. Commissioner Carr, you have talked about having a “Federal Lands Desk” to help land management agencies better coordinate to ensure rural broadband can utilize funds more efficiently and quickly. What are you hearing when it comes to this still being a concern? Would you, or any of the commissioners, work with my office on some ways we can help the land management agencies better coordinate?

Answer: Permitting on federal lands continues to be an issue that slows down infrastructure builds. The FCC has a number of efforts underway to help accelerate infrastructure builds. And I also support bills like Rep. Carter’s American Broadband Deployment Act that aims to achieve this same outcome.

The Honorable August Pfluger

1. As the FCC begins to implement the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, it is critical that we continue to double down on the successes of the first Trump administration, such as the unlicensed use of the full 6 GHz band, while also demonstrating clear leadership and vision for 5G and 6G bands. You were one of the earliest and strongest champions of opening the 6 GHz band to unlicensed Wi-Fi use, helping “supercharge” next-generation connectivity. Thanks in part to your leadership- now with plans to further advance new unlicensed uses with your upcoming

Order and Further Notice later this month - the U.S. now has the full 6 GHz band available for Wi-Fi, and this uniquely American innovation leads China and the world. The Administration deserves credit for pushing our 6 GHz framework internationally and signaling that America should not go backwards on this band. As we head toward WRC-27, there's a real risk that China will seek to influence international decisions that could fragment 6 GHz and undermine the global Wi-Fi ecosystem. As the Commission prepares for WRC-27, what steps are you taking to support the official U.S. position supporting unlicensed use of the full 6 GHz band on a global basis while also supporting access to new spectrum for 6G?

Answer: In January 2026, the FCC unanimously approved an Order to enhance unlicensed use in the 6 GHz band. Specifically, the FCC voted to create a new category of unlicensed devices— Geofenced variable power (GVP) —that can operate outdoors and at higher power than previously authorized devices. GVP devices promise to overcome technical and regulatory constraints of other low power devices such as low power indoor (LPI) and very low power (VLP) devices. GVP devices offer data rates suitable for reality/virtual reality, short-range hotspots, automation processes, and indoor location and navigation because they operate at significantly higher power than VLP devices. At the same time, GVP devices need not be restricted indoors, as is the case with LPI. These benefits will be made possible by restricting GVP devices from operating in exclusion zones on certain frequencies to protect incumbent licensed services from any significant risk of harmful interference. In addition to the proposed Order creating a new category of GVP devices, the Commission will seek comment on proposals that could provide more utility for unlicensed devices in the 6 GHz band. Specifically, the FCC would seek comment on a proposal to allow composite standard-power and LPI access points to operate with additional power under certain circumstances, and a proposal to permit LPI access points to operate on cruise ships.

2. As you know, I am committed to ensuring the safety and security of America's communications networks. I am pleased to have joined so many of my colleagues to ensure full funding for the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program, commonly known as Rip and Replace. The successful completion of this Program will mean the complete removal, destruction, and replacement of equipment deemed a risk to national security. In some instances, where affected program participants may have experienced delays outside of their control via local, state, federal, or Tribal siting and permitting delays, weather restrictions, or complications, full access to funds allocated, supply chain equipment, or labor delays, extensions may be required. Will the FCC commit to providing necessary extensions to program participants affected by such delays, as allowed by the statute, to ensure they can successfully complete the Program?

Answer: When the Wireline Competition Bureau approved applications to participate in the Rip and Replace Program in 2022, demand exceeded available funding, which resulted in a significant funding shortfall. Between 2022 and 2024, recipients indicated that the funding shortfall was a significant impediment to their ability to timely complete their removal, replacement, and disposal projects. Congress authorized additional funding at the end of 2024. In May 2025, the Bureau issued an initial disbursement of the additional funds and gave recipients in Priority 1 until May 2026 to complete their projects. When allocating the

additional funding, the Bureau encouraged recipients to move swiftly to complete their work under the Rip and Replace Program.

3. Efficient spectrum use and innovation are top U.S. priorities. New technologies are being introduced at much lower power levels that can coexist efficiently with other technologies, even in spectrum bands used for important federal functions. One example is Ultra-Wideband (UWB), which has been authorized for years and has a demonstrated track record of causing no harmful interference to sensitive federal systems. UWB is used for important everyday functions, such as unlocking car doors remotely, tracking luggage, and tracking lost pets. Many of those technologies operate in the spectrum used for critical government operations and cause no interference. A recent petition for rulemaking asks the Commission to reexamine its UWB rules to reflect how the technology has evolved and how it is being deployed today. Given UWB's long history of successful coexistence with federal users, the FCC has the opportunity to modernize its rules for these important technologies while continuing to protect critical government operations. When can we expect FCC action to ensure this continued innovation?

Answer: On December 18, 2025, a coalition of automotive and unlicensed wireless companies filed a petition for rulemaking requesting that the FCC initiate an expedited proceeding to amend certain portions of the FCC's part 15 rules to allow for more flexible ultra-wideband (UWB) device operations. Four days later, on December 22, 2025, the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology sought public comment on the petition and opened a new docket. Comments were due on January 30, 2026 and reply comments will be due on February 27, 2026. Once the comment cycle closes, the FCC will evaluate the record to determine next steps.

The Honorable Kat Cammack

1. Chairman Carr now that the FCC has received the CPNI case back from the 6th Circuit, when do you plan to issue an order rescinding the rules? Rescinding these rules soon is very important given how badly that Order misapplies the statute and eviscerates the CRA.

Answer: The Commission is carefully reviewing the 6th Circuit's decision. And we are evaluating potential next steps.

2. Chairman Carr, I think we all share the goal of strengthening our nation's position, navigation, and timing capabilities and reducing reliance on a single system. That's why there's broad interest in identifying complementary or alternative PNT solutions, and why the Department of Transportation is currently examining multiple options. At the same time, stakeholders have raised questions about one proposal that would operate in the Lower 900 MHz Band, particularly regarding potential impacts on the many unlicensed devices already operating there, including systems used for public safety and critical infrastructure. The FCC's docket reflects input from a wide range of industries and technical experts on whether a full-power 5G system can coexist with existing uses of that band. Can you walk us through how the FCC is evaluating those concerns as it considers this proposal alongside other viable

PNT alternatives, and how the Commission is ensuring existing services are protected as part of that process?

Answer: As you reference, the FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry in March 2025 to start building the record to understand what alternatives are out there and weigh the various pros and cons, as well as anticipate any of the consequences. The NOI has given potentially impacted parties the opportunity to weigh in on how to work together to mitigate unintended consequences. The FCC has made no final decisions in this proceeding.

The Honorable Erin Houchin

1. My Data BRIDGE Act (H.R. 4950) directs the FCC to incorporate USDA cultivated land data into the National Broadband Map so rural coverage reflects entire farms and fields—not just a farmhouse address. Would integrating this data materially improve the map’s accuracy for rural coverage and precision agriculture use cases? If so, in what specific ways? How critical are accurate, parcel-level broadband maps to ensuring rural and agricultural communities actually receive the broadband access and funding Congress intends?

Answer: Understanding where broadband is currently available and where federal funding has already been committed to expand access is critically important to ensuring that funding dollars reach communities that still lack high-speed internet services, including rural and agricultural communities. Precision agriculture relies on a combination of both fixed and mobile broadband access to ensure its effective implementation. Currently the FCC’s Broadband Data Collection collects both mobile broadband coverage data as well as location-specific fixed (wireline, wireless, and satellite) services.

Mobile providers are required to submit propagation maps and model details based on specified mobile parameters to the FCC twice per year. Fixed providers are required to report availability for broadband serviceable locations, homes and small businesses, where they have an existing customer, previously had a customer, or can provide service within 10 business days for a standard installation fee.

The FCC makes both mobile and location-specific fixed availability data public on the National Broadband Map. For mobile coverage, the map allows users to zoom-in and view expected mobile coverage over a parcel, farm, or field. The map interface also allows users to view expected coverage both in a hexagonal overlay and as a raw coverage layer. This granular view of expected 4G and 5G mobile service availability provides farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural business operators the ability to assess the current availability of mobile broadband services across their entire parcel and other areas where they rely on access to mobile broadband. The data is also available for download so users can incorporate the relevant data into the systems they use to administer their precision agriculture tools. FCC staff would be happy to provide a demo of this functionality.

2. As you expressed during the hearing, it’s important that the FCC continues to move forward in looking at a range of alternatives and complements to GPS that are available for our deployment. I am aware that the FCC is considering technologies that can provide a

terrestrial complement and backup to GPS. Knowing the urgency to address the issue of GPS resiliency, can you provide a status of where FCC action stands? Are there any barriers to prompt action by the FCC?

Answer: As you reference, the FCC issued a Notice of Inquiry in March 2025 to start building the record to understand what alternatives are out there and weigh the various pros and cons, as well as anticipate any of the consequences. Each of the various GPS alternatives will require different levels of coordination with unique groups of stakeholders. The NOI has given potentially impacted parties the opportunity to weigh in on how to work together to mitigate unintended consequences.

3. It's imperative to have the most accurate understanding of where there is and is not broadband service if we are to fully connect rural America. Current FCC mechanisms for measuring mobile coverage continue to fall short and is not as verified as the fiber fabric. Mobile service measurements are affected by topography and terrain which complicate efforts to ascertain exactly what is, or is not, served. Incorrect data affects everything from federal funding for future deployments to real-time emergency services capabilities. It is critical that the federal government requires mobile service be measured using mobile metrics, not simply by stationary points which do not reflect consumer experience or actual service. Currently, the FCC permits stationary points to qualify under mobile metrics, continuing the frustrating cycle of incorrect and incomplete federal broadband data. Will you commit to the FCC requiring and using established mobile data metrics and measurements for federal programs that support mobile deployment?

Answer: As part of the FCC's Broadband Data Collection providers of mobile broadband services are required to submit both in-vehicle (including driving speeds) and outdoor stationary (including walking speeds) coverage maps and model details based on specified mobile parameters twice per year to the FCC.

Specifically, providers must model 3G, 4G LTE, and 5G-NR at the following speeds:

- 3G: 200/50 kbps
- 4G LTE: 5/1 Mbps
- 5G-NR: Providers must model both:
- 7/1 Mbps; and
- 35/3 Mbps

Each of these speed tiers must assume a minimum cell edge coverage probability of 90 percent and a cell loading of at least 50 percent. Providers are expected to account for topography and terrain, as well as other local factors that may impact availability, in their modeling. Providers maps must also incorporate a "heat map," depicting ranges of signal strength for both their outdoor stationary and in vehicle mobile.

The FCC will continue to collect and verify the mobile broadband availability under the above specified mobile data metrics and consistent with the Broadband Data Act.

Consistent with the Act, the FCC also conducts verifications and audits of provider report mobile coverage data. Both third party data and independent analysis of provider submitted data have informed FCC verifications and audits. In one recent example, Commission staff identified a large increase in reported coverage across a number of states by a national mobile provider. Staff met with the provider to discuss the changes including any changes to their approach to modeling their availability. Following those conversations the Commission initiated a verification that resulted in the provider providing on the ground speed test data that validated the accuracy of their newly reported coverage. In other instances, FCC initiated verifications and audits have resulted in provider reported coverage being removed from the map.

4. As you know at a time when demands on spectrum are increasing across the economy, the FCC has a responsibility to ensure that available spectrum is being used efficiently and in the public interest. The U.S. financial sector leads the world in innovation and technology, and to maintain that role, our nation must encourage investment in the latest communications technologies, including radio spectrum. The result of these technological enhancements can benefit Main Street investors by lowering costs and increasing efficiencies. What is the status for the Commission to adopt a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to allow parties to make use of the shortwave spectrum band (2-25 MHz) band for fixed, long-distance, non-voice communications?

Answer: We are engaging with stakeholders on many bands, including this one.

The Honorable Tom Kean, Jr.

1. In 2024, the FCC unanimously approved an order creating a nationwide framework for the 4.9 GHz Band. This band, which has been set aside for public safety for over two decades, has historically seen an absence of coordination among public safety agencies, which is in part what initiating the process to select a band manager was intended to address. Can you share an update on how this process is going? When will a band manager be selected?

Answer: The order is currently facing multiple legal challenges in the US Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit by several litigants. The FCC continues to work on the relevant issues.

2. The Working Families Tax Cut reinstated the FCC's spectrum auction authority, which is extended for nearly ten years. Can you discuss the viability of this ten-year timeline to get this new, full-power spectrum to market? What is the FCC doing to move quickly to meet growing 5G demand and 6G standardization efforts?

Answer: The Working Families Tax Cut Act requires the FCC to auction at least 100 megahertz of spectrum in the Upper C-band by July 2027 and at least 300-megahertz total by 2034. The FCC has been working hard to implement those provisions in coordination with other federal agencies and stakeholders.

In November 2025, the FCC voted on a proposal to auction up to 180 megahertz of spectrum in the Upper C-band—exceeding the 100 megahertz minimum set by Congress. A lot of work remains ahead for all of the federal agencies and that work is proceeding apace.

Outside of the auctions process, the FCC is working to ensure that competitors can light up otherwise dormant spectrum through secondary market transactions. On this score, AT&T recently agreed to purchase 50 megahertz of spectrum. And SpaceX has agreed to acquire 60 megahertz more. If approved, the latter transaction could advance America's position as the world-leader in next-generation, direct-to-cell technology. These secondary market moves are already showing results. Indeed, just recently, one carrier announced that they built out spectrum they gained access to in 2025 to over 23,000 cell sites in record time—boosting 5G speeds by up to 80 percent.

The Honorable Craig Goldman

1. Chairman Carr, thank you for your strong leadership in combating illegal robocalls and for elevating this issue as a core consumer-protection and priority at the FCC. As part of your efforts, I would like to raise a troubling and growing trend: foreign-owned providers acquiring U.S. entities in ways that allow them to appear domestic, while continuing to facilitate large volumes of illegal robocalls. The consequences for consumers are not hypothetical — they are measurable, ongoing, and severe. One of the most striking examples appears in a December 3, 2025 letter from the North Carolina Department of Justice, submitted on behalf of the 51-member Anti-Robocall Multistate Litigation Task Force. The letter states: “The Anti-Robocall Multistate Litigation Task Force’s ongoing investigation of Inteliquent, Inc. has shown that Inteliquent has transmitted — and continues to transmit — calls associated with high-volume illegal and/or suspicious robocall campaigns on behalf of one or more of its customers.” Inteliquent is owned by Sinch, a foreign company.

The Task Force further found that, of the estimated 3.1 billion Social Security Administration and IRS government-imposter robocalls targeting Americans during the sampled period, approximately 1.425 billion — nearly half — were facilitated by Inteliquent. The pattern extends beyond government-imposter scams. Between January 2023 and November 2024, roughly 40% of all Industry Traceback Group tracebacks tied to financial-services and order-imposter robocalls were facilitated by Inteliquent. In December 2024 alone, that figure was 38.9%.

Mr. Chairman, these are not isolated lapses or edge cases — this appears to be a business model. in which a foreign-owned company profits by enabling fraud that harms American consumers.

These abuses affect millions of families, seniors, and small businesses. And when foreign-owned providers are responsible for this volume of illegal traffic, it raises precisely the kind of national-security and network-integrity concerns that you have rightly emphasized.

So my question is this: As part of your ongoing leadership on robocall enforcement, will you commit to conducting a comprehensive review or investigations of whether foreign-owned

companies — including U.S.-based entities they control — are abusing their access to U.S. communications networks? And will you commit to evaluating whether entities engaged in this conduct should be permitted to continue operating in the United States?

Answer: Yes, we are currently looking at various ways to combat foreign robocalls, including by giving consumers accurate caller ID information, so they do not have to guess if a call comes from overseas or not.

The Honorable Doris Matsui (D-CA)

1. We continue to see large volumes of robocalls and fraudulent activity originating from outside the United States. Many of these calls use U.S. communications networks and SIM farms to reach American consumers. What steps is the FCC taking to prevent foreign-originated fraud and scams from reaching US consumers?

Answer: Yes, we are currently looking at various ways to combat foreign robocalls, including by giving consumers accurate caller ID information so they do not have to guess if a call comes from overseas or not.

- a. Are there specific limitations that prevent the FCC from doing more in this area?

Answer: The FCC is continuing to review the record regarding these proposals and will examine whether additional legislation would aid in the agency's efforts.

- b. If so, can the FCC explain these constraints?

Answer: The FCC is continuing to review the record regarding these proposals and will examine whether additional legislation would aid in the agency's efforts.

2. The Commission recently removed a large number of voice service providers from the Robocall Mitigation Database. Since this purge, has the FCC observed a measurable decrease in fraudulent robocalls targeting American consumers?

Answer: Yes.

- a. If so, can you quantify the results? If not, what further enforcement actions does the FCC plan to take to achieve meaningful results for American consumers?

Answer: According to YouMail Robocall Index, in July 2025, the month before the FCC removed nearly 1,500 providers from the Robocall Mitigation Database, Americans received an estimated 4.3 billion robocalls. In January 2026, Americans received 3.8 billion.

3. Some international gateway providers continue to transmit high volumes of illegal foreign-originated traffic onto US networks, often with inadequate know your customer (KYC) practices. What steps is the FCC taking to identify providers that repeatedly allow

this type of traffic into the US, and what enforcement measures are being used to hold these providers accountable? What limitations prevent the FCC from imposing foreign ownership limits on international gateway providers?

Answer: The FCC should continue to enhance and strengthen its KYC regulations. The FCC is looking at a number of ideas for cracking down on illegal robocalls from abroad.

4. Given that all-IP networks enable more effective use of tools like STIR/SHAKEN and caller ID authentication, both of which are critical in identifying and blocking foreign-originated fraud and scams, what additional actions can the FCC take to accelerate the transition to all-IP networks and ensure these protections are implemented quickly and at scale across all providers?

Answer: The FCC is pursuing a number of steps to accelerate the transition to all IP networks, including through our actions on copper retirement.

5. The U.S. commercial space industry is growing and one of several sectors playing a role in broadband deployment. How important is the commercial space industry to U.S. leadership in space and what does that mean for the people in my district?

Answer: As I have said, we are engaged in a Space Race 2.0 right now. This Space Race looks different from the first time around. Today, we are not just relying on the nation's largest government contractors alone. Instead, we are relying on businesses of all sizes and hundreds of new and scrappy startups. The commercial space industry will allow new technologies like direct-to-cell and others that will meaningfully improve your constituents' lives.

6. How does the FCC plan to support U.S. space and satellite priorities – including for LEO constellations in which the U.S. leads the world – at the ITU and the World Radiocommunication Conference over the next two years, particularly in light of increasing Chinese influence and competition to develop space?

Answer: America is the world leader in space. But China is rapidly catching up, as multiple reports show. Under my leadership, the FCC's policy is laser focused on maintaining America's space dominance. We want to be the best place in the world to license constellations. That is why we are modernizing our SB licensing and looking to release 20,000+ megahertz of satellite broadband spectrum.

To prevail at WRC-27, the FCC commits to speak with one voice alongside the USG and advance the interests of U.S. industry.

- a. What are the benefits of U.S. leadership at the ITU and WRC as they set global spectrum rules and satellite orbits?

Answer: We are able to ensure a level playing field and deny rules that are set by foreign adversaries who have their sights set on dominating up and down every orbit.

7. The Upper C-Band (3.98–4.2 GHz) is vital for satellite distribution of broadcast media relied on by millions of Americans. Congress directed the Commission to auction at least 100 megahertz of this spectrum for wireless broadband use, and the Commission has proposed auctioning as much as 180 megahertz. I support a balanced, all-of-the-above spectrum strategy that ensures spectrum is put to its highest and best use, but I'm concerned that the costs for broadcasters who are forced to migrate to an acceptable alternative to C-Band could be very high. Will the Commission commit to reimbursing all reasonable costs for incumbents to achieve equivalent service on other platforms—including equipment changes, upgrades, retrofits, development of new delivery systems, site diversity, and weather mitigation?

Answer: The FCC is working to ameliorate potential pain points associated with the statutorily required Upper-C Band auction. The agency has an open proceeding underway and has made no final decisions.

8. The FCC is currently considering an open proceeding on SIP Interconnection. IP interconnection is key to modernizing our telecommunications networks and realizing some of the innovations which will improve consumer experience, enhance public safety via Next Generation 911, and aid in combating robocalls and robotext. As the FCC considers this proceeding, how is the FCC working to ensure a seamless transition, and how do you plan to support these network enhancements?

Answer: The FCC is working to facilitate a successful transition to all-IP interconnection for voice services while enhancing public safety, consumer protection, and competition.

9. The FCC is reviewing the Nexstar-Tegna merger, which would concentrate enormous control over what millions of Americans watch, creating a media giant reaching 80 percent of U.S. households. A Nexstar-Tegna conglomerate also would control two (or three) of the top local television stations in major media markets such as Sacramento, St. Louis, Denver, Scranton, Des Moines, and Knoxville.¹ In a 2023 joint statement with then-Commissioner Nathan Simington, you said, “The FCC owes America’s entrepreneurs, its innovators, and the everyday people they serve a regulatory process that is fair, transparent, and evenly applied.”² Do you stand by this statement?

Answer: Yes.

10. In 2023, you criticized the FCC for not taking an up-or-down vote on the Standard General - Tegna merger, instead leaving the matter to the Media Bureau to act on. Will

¹ See Letter from Sen. Warren et al to FCC Chair Brendan Carr (Dec. 15, 2025) (citing local news sources).

² John Hendel, *FCC's in-house court waiting a month to see if Tegna deal collapses*, Politico (April 27, 2023).

you apply that same approach here and support an up or down vote on the Nexstar-Tegna merger?

Answer: I support the agency moving forward with approving the Nexstar – Tegna transaction.

11. You have said that the FCC is “looking at lots of ways to really empower those local broadcast TV stations to actually identify” and serve “the needs of their local communities.”³ Do you stand by that statement?

Answer: Yes.

12. When you speak of looking at ways to empower local stations to identify and serve the needs of their local communities, does this include empowering local stations in communities where residents disagree with President Trump?

Answer: My statement includes local stations in every community.

- a. Are you ensuring that local stations are serving the needs of their local communities regardless of those local communities’ political viewpoints?

Answer: My statement includes local stations in every community.

13. You have also warned against local news stations becoming “100% a mouthpiece for a national programmer.”⁴ Do you stand by that statement?

Answer: In the hearing, I warned that, “We’re losing that balance between the national programmers and the actual local TV stations. In some cases, they’re becoming just a mouthpiece for programing being produced by those national programs.”

14. Is it appropriate for local news stations to become the mouthpiece of a national media company?

Answer: Broadcasters should meet the needs of their local communities.

15. Is it appropriate for local news stations to become a mouthpiece for any politician?

Answer: Broadcasters should meet the needs of their local communities.

16. What enforceable commitments are you seeking to ensure that a Nexstar-Tegna merger will not result in local communities having less access to locally owned media that understands and reflects their own communities?

³ Dade Hayes, *FCC Chairman Brendan Carr Rips Some Local TV Stations As “Mouthpieces” For National Networks*, Deadline (Jan. 8, 2026).

⁴ *Id.*

Answer: The FCC is reviewing this transaction.

17. In the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004, Congress strengthened the current, statutory 39 percent national audience reach cap by removing this cap from the quadrennial review process and prohibiting the Commission from using its forbearance authority on the national cap. Bipartisan voices have raised concerns that a Nexstar-Tegna merger not only would violate this cap but would further “end localism in smaller media markets in favor of national talking points” and “limit competition, increase costs, and narrow the range of viewpoints available to the public.”⁵ And last November, President Trump expressed opposition to repealing or raising this 39% national ownership cap.⁶ Do you agree with President Trump that removing the 39 percent cap would be a bad idea?

Answer: President Trump has stated that we need more competition to the fake news national TV networks. I agree with President Trump.

18. During your tenure as FCC Chairman, how many investigations has the FCC opened or reopened because of the content of a news program or network?

Answer: Any ongoing FCC investigations are based on the relevant portions of the Communications Act as well as FCC rules and precedent.

- a. Please list each investigation, the entities investigated, the date the investigation was launched, and the reason for launching the investigation. For each investigation, list any parties that filed complaints with the FCC alleging a rule violation or requesting an investigation.

Answer: The FCC’s open investigations remain pending.

- b. What is the status of each of these investigations?

Answer: The FCC’s open investigations remain pending.

- c. How many staff and staff hours have been devoted to each of these investigations?

Answer: The FCC’s open investigations remain pending.

⁵ See, e.g., Letter from Congresswoman Elise Stefanik to FCC Chairman Brendan Carr (Dec. 12, 2025); *Newsmax Files With FCC to Oppose Lifting TV Cap*, NewsMax (July 23, 2025); Letter from Sen. Warren et al to FCC Chair Brendan Carr (Dec. 15, 2025).

⁶ Lucas Manfredi, *Trump Opposes Raising or Eliminating FCC’s Broadcast TV Station Ownership Cap*, The Wrap (Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.thewrap.com/trump-opposition-raising-eliminating-fcc-broadcast-tv-station-ownership-cap/>.

- d. When is the last time you updated each of the other FCC commissioners on the status of these investigations?

Answer: I meet regularly with my Commission colleagues, and we discuss a range of FCC matters.

- e. What communications have occurred between you and the current White House, other Trump Administration officials, or other individuals acting on behalf of the White House that relate to these investigations of media entities?

Answer: Consistent with longstanding practice, I do not discuss conversations *vel non* with the President.

- f. What are you doing to protect journalist-source confidentiality when conducting these investigations?

Answer: The FCC investigations are consistent with statutory authority and within bounds of appropriate laws and rules.

19. According to the FCC Consumer Guide on Broadcast News Distortion, news distortion requires clear evidence that the broadcaster “*deliberately* distorted a factual news report.” News distortion “must involve a significant event and not merely a minor or incidental aspect of the news report.” The distortion must be initiated by the management of the station. And news distortion does not apply when a broadcaster is exercising ordinary editorial judgment, nor does it apply where there is only “mere inaccuracy or difference of opinion.”⁷ In each of these investigations under your tenure as Chairman, including the reopened investigations into ABC, NBC, and CBS,⁸ what evidence does the FCC have of any deliberate, intentional falsification of a significant event by the broadcaster?

Answer: The FCC’s open investigations remain pending.

20. You directed the FCC to open an investigation into the local radio station KCBS 740 AM in San Francisco after the station covered publicly available information about the January 26, 2025 ICE raid in East San Jose. After the launch of this investigation, KCBS demoted the anchor and dialed back on political programming for months.⁹ At the January 14, 2026 oversight hearing, you said you believed the FCC received complaints or heard concerns about this specific radio station. Who did the FCC receive complaints or hear concerns from?

⁷ FCC Consumer Guide, Broadcast News Distortion, <https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/broadcast-news-distortion.pdf> (last reviewed July 18, 2024).

⁸ Liam Scott, *FCC launches media investigations, reinstates complaints*, Voice of America News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-communications-agency-reinstates-complaints-starts-investigating-media/7964421.html>.

⁹ Byron Tau, *How an AM radio station in California weathered the Trump administration’s assault on media*, The Associated Press (Dec. 15, 2025), <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2025/how-an-am-radio-station-in-california-weathered-the-trump-administrations-assault-on-media/>.

Answer: There is no update to provide on this matter.

21. In its January 26, 2025 broadcast, KCBS-AM reported that immigration agents were in East San Jose, driving unmarked vehicles include a black Dodge Durango, a gray Nissan Maxima and white Nissan truck. Was KCBS reporting on publicly available information about ICE?

Answer: There is no update to provide on this matter.

22. During the January 14, 2026 oversight hearing, I asked, “When you talk about the public interest, does the public include Americans who disagree with the President?” In response, you said, “Yes, the public includes people who disagree with the President.” I also asked you, “Does the public interest include informing the public about what their government, including ICE, is doing in their local community?” You responded, “The core ingredient of the public interest standard is to identify the needs of your local community and make sure you’re meeting that.” When you talk about the public interest standard, does the public include American citizens and legal residents who want information to avoid wrongful detention by ICE?

Answer: The public interest includes identifying the needs of local communities.

23. The FCC approved the Paramount-Skydance merger almost immediately after President Trump received a settlement check in his private litigation over how 60 Minutes edited its interview with Kamala Harris. In your August 12, 2025 reply to Senator Blumenthal’s concerns about the conditions surrounding the Paramount merger, you justified the inclusion of an ombudsman by saying, “An ombudsman mechanism is not a new concept for the FCC when it comes to transactions.”¹⁰ On August 7, 2025, you said you would be in a “trust but verify” posture when examining perceived bias at CBS.¹¹ Have you spoken with the ombudsman?

Answer: Despite some social media posts to the contrary, the ombudsman does not report to me or the President of the United States.

- a. Do you expect to receive information about how the ombudsman handles specific matters?

Answer: As noted above, the ombudsman does not report to me or the President of the United States.

¹⁰ Letter from FCC Chairman Brendan Carr to Sen. Richard Blumenthal (Aug. 12, 2025), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-414089A2.pdf>.

¹¹ Dan Novak, *FCC to Monitor CBS News Bias After Merger Approval, Agency Chair Says*, National Law Journal (Aug. 7, 2025), <https://www.law.com/nationallawjournal/2025/08/07/fcc-to-monitor-cbs-news-bias-after-merger-approval-agency-chair-says/?slreturn=20260127180728>.

24. Well before you approved the merger immediately after the settlement check came in, there were news reports in multiple outlets, including the New York Post and Wall Street Journal, that Paramount higher-ups believed settling with Trump would help get regulators to approve the merger.¹² They even reportedly had concerns that the settlement could be seen as a bribe if you approved the merger in short order afterward,¹³ which is exactly what you did. Is it appropriate for the FCC to create the impression among media executives that they have to pay to play to avoid regulatory retaliation?

Answer: Your allegation is not correct.

25. President Trump claimed there was a secret side deal with Paramount's new ownership to air pro-Trump Public Service Announcements.¹⁴ Would "secret side deals" be in the public interest?

Answer: Your question appears to be trying to make an allegation about litigation that did not involve the FCC. The Commission made its decision in the transaction before the FCC based on the facts, the law, and the record before the agency.

26. President Trump's amended complaint in his lawsuit against CBS claimed that Truth Social's parent company Trump Media & Technology Group Corp, of which he is a major shareholder, is a competitor of CBS.¹⁵ Is it in the public interest for you to carry out President Trump's agenda to damage competitors of his company?

Answer: Your question appears to be trying to make an allegation about litigation that did not involve the FCC. The Commission made its decision in the transaction before the FCC based on the facts, the law, and the record before the agency.

27. Last year, the Supreme Court wrote that it had "many times held, in many contexts, that it is no job for government to decide what counts as the right balance of private expression—to 'un-bias' what it thinks biased, rather than to leave such judgments to

¹² Ariel Zilber, *Paramount, Trump agree to appoint mediator to settle \$20B lawsuit over "60 Minutes" Kamala Harris interview*, New York Post (Feb. 25, 2025) ("Paramount executives reportedly believe that reaching a resolution with Trump could reduce the risk of regulatory interference with the Skydance merger.");

¹³ Jessica Toonkel, *Paramount Executives Ask: Could They Be Sued for Settling Trump's \$20 Billion CBS Lawsuit?*, Wall Street Journal (Feb. 14, 2025), <https://www.wsj.com/business/media/paramount-executives-ask-could-they-be-sued-for-settling-trumps-20-billion-cbs-lawsuit-228604a2?msocid=1d52273e97976f8916ae339f96d86e8e>.

¹⁴ Todd Spangler, *Trump Claims '60 Minutes' Settlement Is Worth as Much as \$35 Million Including 'Advertising'; Paramount Denies Deal Includes PSAs*, Variety (July 4, 2025), <https://variety.com/2025/tv/news/trump-60-minutes-lawsuit-settlement-advertising-35-million-paramount-psa-1236447353/>.

¹⁵ Chris Perez, *'Unfair competition': Trump now wants \$20 billion from CBS over Kamala Harris '60 Minutes' interview as he amends lawsuit to add new claims and a co-plaintiff*, MSN (Feb. 9, 2025), <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/unfair-competition-trump-now-wants-20-billion-from-cbs-over-kamala-harris-60-minutes-interview-as-he-amends-lawsuit-to-add-new-claims-and-a-co-plaintiff/ar-AA1yHHg0>.

speakers and their audiences.”¹⁶ “However imperfect the private marketplace of ideas,” the Court also wrote, “a worse proposal” would be “the government itself deciding when speech was imbalanced, and then coercing speakers to provide more of some views or less of others.”¹⁷ Is it the FCC’s job to “un-bias” what it thinks biased or unbalanced? If so, describe the FCC’s specific job here. Over what type of content does the FCC have a job in “un-biasing”? And what specific authority is given to the FCC to “un-bias”?

Answer: The Communications Act directs the FCC to ensure broadcasters comply with their public interest obligations.

28. At the December 2025 Open Commission Meeting press conference, you stated that “A core component of the public interest standard is to identify the needs of the local community, the community that a broadcaster is licensed to. There’s an issues and programs list that they’re supposed to put in their public inspection file. And the question is whether they have identified the needs of the local community and whether through the programming they’re meeting those needs. We’ve other specific rules as well. Broadcast hoax is codified on regulation that spells out exactly what a broadcast hoax is. We have a news distortion policy, again that’s been developed through FCC case law. We have political equal opportunity regulations. So I do think the public interest standard has been fleshed out by the agency for 50 or 60 years.”¹⁸ Do you stand by this statement?

Answer: The public interest standard has been fleshed out by the agency for decades.

29. When you say, “a core component of the public interest standard is to identify the needs of the local community, the community that a broadcaster is licensed to,” does this include local communities where residents disagree with President Trump? Does the public interest standard mean that local stations should be serving the needs of their local communities regardless of those local communities’ political viewpoints?

Answer: Broadcasters must serve the needs of each of their communities, which each have unique features.

30. Specifically describe your interpretation of the “public interest standard” and the FCC’s plan and authority to enforce your interpretation of such standard. You have stated the public interest standard has been fleshed out for 50 or 60 years. Specifically describe the applicable case law interpreting this public interest standard. For each case law, explain how it applies to each investigation the FCC has opened or reopened, under your tenure as FCC chairman, against a broadcaster using the public interest standard as the basis for the investigation. How do the facts of each prior case law resemble or differ from these current investigations?

¹⁶ *Moody v. NetChoice, LLC*, 603 U.S. 707, 719 (2024).

¹⁷ *Id.* at 733.

¹⁸ Brendan Carr, Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, Press Conference at the December 2025 Open Commission Meeting (Dec. 2025), (video at 36:40–38:00).

Answer: The core ingredient of the public interest standard is to identify the needs of your local community and that the FCC has provided substantial guidance to broadcasters over many years.

- a. Specifically describe the FCC precedent and any other documents related to your interpretation of the FCC's authority over national broadcast networks.

Answer: The public interest has been defined over many years through agency precedent and case law.

- b. For each precedent or document cited, explain how it applies to each investigation the FCC has opened or reopened, under your tenure as FCC chairman, against a broadcaster using the public interest standard as the basis for the investigation.

Answer: The public interest has been defined over many years through agency precedent and case law.

- c. How do the facts resemble or differ from these current investigations?

Answer: The FCC investigations are consistent with statutory authority and within bounds of appropriate laws and rules.

31. In January, the FCC Media Bureau released a Public Notice stating that broadcast stations would be subject to the equal time rule where the *bona fide* news exemptions do not apply, including with respect to late night and daytime talk shows. The Public Notice did not change the criteria for determining if a program is exempt but—instead of relying on the good faith judgment of the broadcaster on whether a program is exempt based on FCC precedent—states that “the exemptions are limited to the program that was the subject of the request.” The Notice also suggests there is a risk the FCC will disagree with the broadcaster’s determination unless the broadcaster files for and receives a ruling from the FCC that a specific program is exempt.¹⁹ This Notice is placing the FCC in a position of making subjective judgments over whether programming decisions are being made for partisan purposes or whether the program simply reflects views that some political parties do not like. In making these assessments, the FCC cannot exceed the limit of its authority under Section 326 of the Communications Act, which makes clear that the FCC does not have the “power of censorship” over any broadcast station, nor can its actions “interfere with the right of free speech” by the broadcaster. This Public Notice seems to share parallels with the Fairness Doctrine, where the FCC policed whether major broadcasting outlets spent equal time covering both sides of controversial issues of national importance. Supporters of this Notice have claimed it is an “important step” to “the end of left-wing bias on the part of networks”²⁰ and “means Hollywood hosts and

¹⁹ FCC’s Media Bureau Provide Guidance on Political Equal Opportunities Requirement for Broadcast Television Stations, Public Notice, DA 26-68 (rel. Jan. 21, 2026).

²⁰ Sean Moran, *Exclusive-‘Left-Wing Bias’ on Television Takes Another Hit: FCC Issues Guidance on Political Equal Opportunities for Broadcast Stations*, Breitbart (Jan. 21, 2026), <https://www.breitbart.com/the->

network executives can no longer feature Democrat candidates while shutting out Republicans.”²¹ Are you advocating for the FCC to reinstate the fairness doctrine?

Answer: The FCC guidance document addressed the statutory equal opportunities requirement and the bona fide news exemptions, not the fairness doctrine.

32. The equal-time rule applies to the political candidate only. Do you agree that the equal-time rule does not apply to the political candidate’s spokesperson?

Answer: The Communications Act as well as the FCC’s rules and cases lay out the contours of the equal time requirements.

- a. And that the equal-time rule does not apply to the political candidate’s supporters?

Answer: The Communications Act as well as the FCC’s rules and cases lay out the contours of the equal time requirements.

33. Do you agree that the FCC may only consider or act on complaints under the equal time rule when those complaints are filed by political candidates who have been denied equal time by a broadcaster?

Answer: The Communications Act as well as the FCC’s rules and cases lay out the contours of the equal time requirements.

34. Do you agree that outside groups do not have standing to bring complaints against broadcasters for equal time rule violations?

Answer: The Communications Act as well as the FCC’s rules and cases lay out the contours of the equal time requirements.

35. Does this new approach mean you will be ensuring these rules are properly followed by radio stations too, including talk radio and other stations that traditionally carry one-sided, right-wing political programming? Should these radio stations also file for a declaratory ruling from the FCC?

Answer: The Communications Act as well as the FCC’s rules and cases lay out the contours of the equal time requirements.

The Honorable Nanette D. Barragán (D-CA):

[media/2026/01/21/exclusive-end-of-left-wing-bias-on-network-tv-fcc-issues-guidance-on-political-equal-opportunities-for-broadcast-stations/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/media/2026/01/21/exclusive-end-of-left-wing-bias-on-network-tv-fcc-issues-guidance-on-political-equal-opportunities-for-broadcast-stations/).

²¹ Daniel Suhr, X post (Jan. 21, 2026 at 10:52 AM ET), <https://x.com/danielsuhr/status/2014003249607533037>; Daniel Suhr, X post (Jan. 21, 2026 at 11:53 AM ET), <https://x.com/danielsuhr/status/2014018551640707228>.

1. During the hearing, Chairman Carr, you asserted that wireless plan prices were down 4.1% between December 2024 and December 2025 and that smartphone prices were down 9.8% during that same period. Please describe and provide any analysis the Commission has undertaken since December 2024 to assess the impact of these and other wireless service pricing trends on consumers eligible for Lifeline support.

Answer: This information is available at the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics website. Every 2 years, the Commission publishes the Communications Marketplace Report that assesses the state of competition across the communications sector.

- a. Also, describe and provide any analysis the Commission has undertaken since December 2024 to assess whether the Lifeline support amount of \$9.25 monthly represents a level of support sufficient to ensure that Lifeline eligible households, including those that are unbanked and underbanked, can afford to purchase monthly access to widely available, entry level wireless broadband plans.

Answer: The Commission recently adopted an item to protect the integrity of the USF program and make sure that eligible consumers have access to Lifeline subsidies while ensuring that hardworking Americans aren't paying to subsidize dead people in the program.

2. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' January 13, 2026, Consumer Price Index, prices for internet services and electronic information providers increased 2.8 percent from 2024 to 2025. When adjusted for inflation, the average price for home internet plans grew by 4.8 percent over that period. Please describe and provide any analysis the Commission has undertaken since December 2024 to assess the real-world impact of rising home broadband prices on Lifeline-eligible households, including their ability to maintain fixed internet service.

Answer: Following record inflation from Biden-era policies, the FCC on my watch is working to bring prices down for consumers. We are doing so through a variety of actions, from bringing more spectrum on line to permitting reform, to helping providers introduce new and competitive offerings. That work is already showing results, as speeds are up and prices are down, as I have noted. The upcoming report will include broad analysis of issues you asked about.

- a. Specifically, please describe any analysis the Commission has undertaken to determine whether these households are being forced to downgrade service, rely solely on mobile connections, or forgo home broadband altogether as prices increase.

Answer: The FCC conducts a range of different analyses. For instance, every 2 years, the Commission publishes the Communications Marketplace Report that assesses the state of competition across the communications sector.

- b. In addition, please describe what steps, if any, the Commission has taken since December 2024 to monitor how the Lifeline subsidy is used, encourage providers to offer low-cost broadband plans that align with the \$9.25 support, and adjust program rules to reduce barriers for eligible households within the current statutory subsidy amount.

Answer: The FCC recently adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that seeks comment on and tees up reforms to the FCC's Lifeline program.

3. Chairman Carr, the FCC has already begun the process of making the upper C-Band spectrum available to commercial wireless carriers via auction. However, in order to maximize the amount of Upper C-Band spectrum repurposed for 5G/6G wireless use, it seems likely that incumbent users, such as those delivering video programming, will need to relocate to other bands like the Ku- and Ka-bands and/or transition to alternative distribution technologies like fiber, which can take time. Do you commit to ensuring that eligible incumbent licensees are able to orderly relocate to other bands able to deliver substantially the same level of service, will be reimbursed for relocation expenses, and that they will have sufficient time to transition from the Upper C-band?

Answer: The FCC is actively working on the Upper-C Band proceeding.

4. Chairman Carr, while Nexstar has told investors it achieves economies of scale by consolidating overlapping station operations and technical infrastructure — changes that typically involve workforce reductions — the 117-page Nexstar/Tegna application contains no meaningful workforce impact analysis, no market-by-market staffing disclosures, and no commitments to preserve local newsroom operations. Since its Tribune acquisition in 2019, Nexstar has carried out repeated layoffs, including at the local station level, raising serious concerns about newsroom hollowing-out and reduced local service. At the same time, under your leadership, the Commission has continued to invoke its public interest authority to scrutinize broadcaster conduct, including issues affecting service to local communities. Given this, and because journalists and broadcast technicians are integral to providing service to local communities, what will you do to ensure that Nexstar/Tegna and other pending broadcast transactions preserve critical local market jobs, including journalists and broadcast technicians?

Answer: Any FCC decision on a particular transaction will ensure that the outcome promotes the public interest.

The Honorable Troy A. Carter (D-LA):

1. Rural broadband providers have invested hundreds of millions of private capital in CBRS-specific equipment and network deployment based on the current framework of the CBRS band, providing services to hundreds of thousands of Americans. Can you commit that the FCC will not pursue changes to the current CBRS operations that may threaten the services being delivered and to ensure the stability necessary for continued investment?

Answer: The FCC should always act mindful of incumbent operations.

2. A significant number of awardees under the BEAD program would like to incorporate CBRS, particularly General Authorized Access, into their network plans. Chairman Carr - are you considering any changes to the existing CBRS regime that could cause BEAD recipients to need to change their plans?

Answer: The FCC should always act mindful of incumbent operations.

3. Spectrum sharing, like in the CBRS band, has proven to be a valuable tool for balancing government and private sector needs, particularly for rural broadband providers. As you plan your upcoming spectrum auctions as required in the OBBB, are you considering the greater utilization of spectrum sharing technologies to help the government accomplish those goals?

Answer: The FCC has been pursuing an all of the above approach to spectrum policy.

The Honorable Greg Landsman (D-OH):

1. Bearing in mind that we should not mimic China's authoritarian, communist approach, what are one or two priorities we should focus on for WRC27 and how can Congress help the FCC, the rest of the federal government, and the private sector address these priorities in Shanghai next year?

Answer: The FCC should ensure that we have adequate spectrum for the next-generation of LEO satellite systems and flexibility to support new D2C services.

2. Is the FCC able to effectively coordinate with the other important agencies in this process – State and Commerce?

Answer: Yes, and we are indeed doing so.

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

Oversight of the Federal Communications Commission
Wednesday, January 14, 2026, at 10:15 A.M.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

COVER PAGE
Anna M. Gomez

THE HONORABLE DORIS MATSUI (D-CA):

Question 1: During the hearing, you described how the FCC's news distortion policy does not allow the FCC to revoke or not renew a broadcast license for perceived bias. Is there any historical precedent or legal basis for the FCC to revoke or not renew a broadcast license for perceived bias?

Answer: No. The Commission's authority to revoke broadcast licenses is constrained by the First Amendment and Section 326 of the Communications Act, which specifically prohibits the Commission from censoring broadcasts.

(a) Would the Nexstar-Tegna merger make local news more independent? Or more easily pressured into repeating the same message everywhere?

Answer: I believe the proposed consolidation would make the merged broadcast stations less independent and more easily pressured into repeating the same message everywhere. The Communications Act and the Commission's media ownership rules require broadcasters to operate in the public interest. The public interest for local broadcasters has long been defined as facilitating localism, diversity of viewpoints and competition.

- Localism means providing programming that serves the interests of the station's community of license;
- Diversity of viewpoints means that different broadcast station owners or ownership groups bring such owners' individual priorities in what programming to deliver to their communities of license. It is focused on the absence of common ownership, not any particular viewpoint.
- Competition means that having a diversity of viewpoints competing to serve local communities will result in programming that serves the interests of the local community because the broadcasters need to compete for their audience.

The economies of scale broadcasters intend to use to save money through consolidation include, among many things, the following:

- Using single studios for broadcast for multiple stations;
- Sharing equipment;
- Sharing reporters across stations;
- Sharing management personnel across stations; and
- Stations reporting to executives that are responsible for stations across geographically and demographically varied communities of license. Such management decisions are driven by profitably serving the corporate parent in light of all their stations.

Question 2: Under Chairman Carr, the FCC reopened an investigation of CBS over how it chose to edit its 2024 "60 Minutes" interview with Vice President Harris, even after CBS complied with his request to provide the full transcript and the unedited video. Similarly, Chairman Carr directed the FCC to reopen investigations into ABC and NBC. All three of these complaints, in addition to a complaint against Fox, had been dismissed by the previous FCC under Chairman Jessica Rosenworcel. Chairman Carr reinstated the three complaints filed by a conservative group over coverage alleged to be unfavorable to the Trump campaign, while declining to reinstate the Fox complaint over alleged pro-Trump

election disinformation.¹ It seems these investigations are selectively opened and then meant to stay open to provide the FCC with leverage over the content on the networks. News distortion requires evidence of deliberate, intentional falsification, not ordinary editorial judgment, correct?

Answer: Any actions that the FCC takes based on broadcaster programming must be grounded in the First Amendment and Section 326 of the Communications Act, which prohibits the FCC from censoring broadcasters.

A violation of the Commission's news distortion policy "must involve a significant event and not merely a minor or incidental aspect of the news report." In weighing the constitutionality of the policy, courts have recognized that the policy "makes a crucial distinction between deliberate distortion and mere inaccuracy or difference of opinion." As a result, broadcasters are only subject to enforcement if it can be proven that they have deliberately distorted a factual news report. Expressions of opinion or errors stemming from mistakes are not actionable.

Question 3: Does the FCC have evidence of any deliberate, intentional falsification by CBS in its editing of this interview?

Answer: No. CBS released the full video and transcript of the interview in question. It is clear that CBS News made editorial decisions of the type that news organizations make every day. There is no evidence of deliberate, intentional falsification.

(a) Do either the CBS or ABC incidents being investigated meet the standard for news distortion?

Answer: No. There is no evidence of deliberately distorting a factual news report in either case.

Question 4: The complaint against NBC was over an alleged violation of the "equal time" rules. Does this investigation have any merit? When was the last time you were briefed on the status of these investigations?

Answer: This investigation has no merit. As explained in the decision dismissing this complaint, and acknowledged in the complaint itself, NBC provided the required notice and negotiated equal time with President Trump's campaign in the form of two 60-second advertisements, one during a NASCAR race and the other during Sunday Night Football. The decision dismissing the complaint (<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-25-56A1.pdf>) was reconsidered by the FCC following the change in Administrations. I have not been briefed on the status of these investigations.

(a) In what capacity have you or members of your staff participated in such investigations?

Answer: Enforcement investigations are conducted by the Commission's Enforcement Bureau. My requests for updates about the complaints have been refused.

¹ See Liam Scott, *FCC launches media investigations, reinstates complaints*, Voice of America News, <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-communications-agency-reinstates-complaints-starts-investigating-media/7964421.html>.

(b) Do you believe these investigations are credible?

Answer: None of the investigations into alleged violations of the Commission's equal time rule or news distortion policy are credible for the reasons explained in the orders dismissing the complaints that were subsequently reversed by this Administration which can be found at the following links:

CBS Complaint: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-408899A1.pdf>

NBC Complaint: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-25-56A1.pdf>

ABC Complaint: <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-408880A1.pdf>

Question 5: Under Chairman Carr, the FCC opened an investigation into the local radio station KCBS 740 AM in San Francisco after the station covered publicly available information about the January 26, 2025 ICE raid in East San Jose. After the launch of this investigation, KCBS demoted the anchor and dialed back on political programming for months.² For Sacramento and communities across the country, what is lost when newsrooms hesitate to report the facts about government operations because they fear retaliation?

Answer: When newsrooms hesitate to report the facts about government operations because they fear retaliation we lose a critical pillar of democracy. Independent journalists, those not subject to political retribution for stories disfavored by those with political power, serve as the "fourth estate," a term that signifies the importance of their role to ensure transparency and hold power accountable in a democracy.

Question 6: Commissioner Gomez, last November you said, "Ten months into this Administration, this FCC has still not put forward a single actionable solution to address the growing cybersecurity threat to our communications networks. Not one concrete proposal. Not one protection standard. Not one accountability mechanism. Its proposed rollback is not a cybersecurity strategy. It is a hope and a dream that will leave Americans less protected than they were the day the Salt Typhoon breach was discovered."³

(a) It's now over a year into this administration. Do you still stand by that statement?

Answer: Salt Typhoon was described as the worst telecommunications hack in our nation's history. It exposed serious vulnerabilities in our networks and demonstrated that foreign adversaries will act aggressively and decisively. Yet more than a year later, we still do not have a concrete, enforceable cybersecurity framework in place in response to this attack. The Commission rescinded the January Declaratory Ruling and NPRM that sought to establish accountability and clear obligations, and nothing meaningful has replaced it.

Collaboration has value, and I support it as part of a broader strategy. But voluntary efforts alone are not a substitute for enforceable standards. Without binding protections and clear accountability mechanisms, we are relying on hope rather than duty. At a moment of escalating

² Byron Tau, *How an AM radio station in California weathered the Trump administration's assault on media*, The Associated Press (Dec. 15, 2025), <https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2025/how-an-am-radio-station-in-california-weathered-the-trump-administrations-assault-on-media/>.

³ Anna Gomez, Press Release, *Gomez Slams FCC Vote to Scrap Cybersecurity Requirements in Response to Salt Typhoon* (Nov. 19, 2025), <https://docsfcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-415409A1.pdf>.

cyber threats, that leaves Americans less protected and signals hesitation where resolve is needed.

Question 7: If the FCC declines to set enforceable standards, what message does that send to adversaries targeting U.S. networks, and what message does it send to families who assume their communications are secure?

Answer: It sends the wrong message at the worst possible time. To adversaries, it signals that after the most significant telecommunications breach in our history, the United States chose not to adopt enforceable protections. When foreign actors are actively probing for weaknesses, relying solely on voluntary measures invites further testing of our defenses.

To American families, it creates uncertainty. People reasonably assume that when they pick up the phone, send a text, or access critical services, their communications are protected by more than good intentions. Without clear standards and accountability in response to this attack, there are no benchmarks to measure network protection and no way to assess whether appropriate safeguards were in place after the next breach. At a time of increasing foreign cyber aggression, declining to act decisively sends a message of weakness to our adversaries and uncertainty to the American people.

Question 8: How does the FCC plan to support U.S. space and satellite priorities – including for LEO constellations in which the U.S. leads the world – at the ITU and the World Radiocommunication Conference over the next two years, particularly in light of increasing Chinese influence and competition to develop space?

Answer: The FCC supports U.S. space and satellite priorities through both its regulatory actions and its issue leadership. The Commission's long, bipartisan, history of supporting innovative space services helps it garner support among partner nations for positions that drive the policy outcomes to expand U.S. economic leadership. For example, in 2022 it granted the first license for commercial satellite-direct-to-standard-mobile-phone service, which it followed in 2024 with its adoption of a framework for supplemental coverage from space. In between, its support for U.S. positions and advocacy at WRC23 helped set the stage for such progress.

(a) What are the benefits of U.S. leadership at the ITU and WRC as they set global spectrum rules and satellite orbits?

Answer: The adoption of policies that support the continued growth of our satellite industry that is the envy of the world benefits the long term national and economic security of the United States.

Question 9: The FCC is currently considering an open proceeding on SIP Interconnection. IP interconnection is key to modernizing our telecommunications networks and realizing some of the innovations which will improve consumer experience, enhance public safety via Next Generation 911, and aid in combating robocalls and robotexts. As the FCC considers this proceeding, how is the FCC working to ensure a seamless transition, and how do you plan to support these network enhancements?

Answer: IP interconnection is central to the transition to modern networks. It supports improved call quality, stronger robocall mitigation, and the full promise of Next Generation 911. As we consider this proceeding, the priority must be ensuring that the transition is seamless, reliable, and grounded in public safety and consumer protection. That includes providing regulatory clarity, avoiding destabilizing shifts, and maintaining reliability as legacy systems are phased out.

We must also ensure interoperability, secure routing, and transparent interconnection practices so that modernization strengthens, rather than weakens, our networks. If done correctly, IP interconnection can enhance innovation, reinforce security, and improve consumer experience nationwide while safeguarding public safety.

Question 10: Can you please speak to the importance of incorporating policies such as maintaining competition in rural areas and preventing anticompetitive conduct even when the proceeding is pending (such as a rate freeze), and setting reasonable protections for IP-to-IP interconnection to maximize the benefits to consumers?

Answer: Maintaining competition, especially in rural areas, is critical during this transition. Rural communities often have fewer provider choices and thinner operating margins. Even small disruptions or anticompetitive conduct can have outsized consequences for consumers who may already have limited alternatives.

As this proceeding moves forward, it is important that we guard against conduct that could distort competition. Modernization and competition are not competing goals. They are complementary. If we preserve competition, particularly in rural America, and ensure fair interconnection practices, the transition to IP networks can expand opportunity, strengthen service reliability, and deliver meaningful benefits to consumers.

THE HONORABLE NANETTE D. BARRAGÁN (D-CA):

Question 1: Commissioner Gomez, you have emphasized the importance of unlicensed spectrum to American innovation. Indeed, studies show Wi-Fi now carries over 85% of all smartphone data and will contribute an estimated \$1.9 trillion to the U.S. economy this year. Given this massive reliance, how critical is it for the Commission to identify a steady pipeline of new unlicensed spectrum to support this consumer demand and innovation?

Answer: Unlicensed spectrum is a key tool for connectivity and sound spectrum management as well as a critical component of the digital economy. That is why, in January 2026, I voted to approve expanded access to unlicensed spectrum for new devices in the 6 GHz band.

Back in 2020, the FCC made an important decision to support wireless innovation and meet consumer demand by allowing unlicensed use of the 6 GHz Band. At that time, wireless devices such as appliances, wearables, speakers, and an array of consumer electronics, connecting to the Internet through Wi-Fi and other standards were growing in popularity across consumer households. But the bands dedicated for unlicensed connectivity were growing crowded. To allow for wireless innovation to continue to reach consumers while protecting the incumbents of the 6 GHz band, the FCC permitted two new devices to operate in this band – Standard Power devices under the control of an Automated Frequency System, and Low Power Indoor devices.

Since then, the popularity and types of connected devices has only continued to grow. So, in 2023, the FCC authorized a new class of unlicensed devices to operate in the 6 GHz band – Very Low Power devices. They were authorized to operate first only in a portion of the band, and later in 2024, throughout the entire band. Those decisions propelled more innovation in wearable and Virtual Reality devices.

Yet innovation inspires innovation. There are even more devices today that will need to rely on unlicensed spectrum to connect consumers. That is why, in January 2026, the FCC authorized a new type of unlicensed devices to operate in the 6 GHz band – Geofenced Variable Power devices.

This new class of devices will operate at higher power, but will work with a geofencing system to minimize the possibility of harmful interference and stay out of exclusion zones. The FCC's decision on further unlicensed access to the 6 GHz band, demonstrates that sound spectrum policy can choose both innovation and protecting licensed incumbents and sends a message beyond our borders that we are committed to next-generation Wi-Fi innovation.

THE HONORABLE GREG LANDSMAN (D-OH):

Question 1: Bearing in mind that we should not mimic China's authoritarian, communist approach, what are one or two priorities we should focus on for WRC27 and how can Congress help the FCC, the rest of the federal government, and the private sector address these priorities in Shanghai next year?

Answer: The U.S. should focus on policies that support the continued growth of our nascent non-geostationary orbit (NGSO) satellite industry that is the envy of the world. Congress providing the State Department, NTIA and the FCC the significant human and financial resources necessary to work with our allies throughout the world early and often to ensure we comprehensively address the wide range of critical issues on the WRC27 agenda over the course of the next two years is key to our success.

Question 2: Is the FCC able to effectively coordinate with the other important agencies in this process – State and Commerce?

Answer: The Commission has long-standing processes in place to ensure coordination across federal agencies.

Responses from Commissioner Olivia Trusty

Oversight of the FCC, January 14, 2026

Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record, due 2/17/2026

The Honorable Rick Allen

1. Existing licensed and unlicensed users in the Lower 900 MHz band (902-928 MHz) argue that NextNav’s proposed high-power 5G-based PNT system would cause unacceptable interference. What specific, independent technical analysis has the FCC conducted to verify NextNav’s claims that its high-power 5G-based PNT system will not cause harmful interference to incumbent users, particularly critical infrastructure and Part 15 devices (particularly in the logistics, retail and security space)?

In March 2025, the FCC adopted a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) seeking comment on specific actions it can take to help develop complements and alternatives to GPS with the goal of ensuring robust and reliable PNT technologies and solutions. The NOI sought comment on a solution provided by NextNav that combines its PNT system with existing LTE and 5G network signals to deliver 3D positioning and timing information. Separately, in August 2024, the Commission’s Wireless Telecommunications Bureau sought comment on a Petition for Rulemaking filed by NextNav requesting to reconfigure the 902-928 MHz band (Lower 900 MHz Band) and adopt new rules to enable the deployment of a 5G terrestrial positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) network that “complements and backs up” the U.S. Global Positioning System (GPS). The records developed in these two proceedings include robust technical analyses from a variety of outside stakeholders. To date, the Commission has not taken further action.

2. I am committed to finding policy solutions to eliminate the scourge of robocalls and robotexts on consumers, which at the least are annoying but at their worst ripe for fraud and deception. As Congress looks at every angle of this issue, the Commission’s efforts in examining transitioning to all-IP networks, if implemented correctly, may assist in this endeavor. I encourage the Commission to take into consideration delays caused by ILECs’ resistance to an all-IP transition due to current practices of requiring IP-capable competitors to interconnect through outdated TDM tandem facilities (and charging anti-competitive or unreasonable amounts in TDM interconnection fees in the process), contributing to uncompetitive market-place practices, and unnecessary reliance on outdated technology, which ultimately affect consumers and allow the incessant issue of robocalls to persist. Will you commit to holding ILECs accountable for any uncompetitive practices identified on this issue and specifically review the ways all-IP carriers are forced to engage with ILECs on the issue?

In October the FCC issued an NPRM seeking comment on IP interconnection issues, including the current state of marketplace negotiations and the appropriate policy framework for FCC oversight. I'm committed to acting in that proceeding based on the record evidence and the FCC's statutory authority, and to implementing and enforcing the resulting legal and policy framework for IP interconnection for all providers, including ILECs.

The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith

1. It is my understanding that the Commission is examining state and local permitting practices and that some broadband providers have been denied permission to deploy internet infrastructure because of either express, or *de facto*, state and local *moratoria* on construction. I know the Commission previously found that *moratoria* violate Section 253 of the Communications Act. What can the Commission do to counter overbearing state and local barriers that the Commission determines are unlawful?

The Commission began two proceedings last September to evaluate how it can build on past precedent and clarify how statutory preemption provisions under the Communications Act apply to state and local barriers to broadband deployment. In addition to these proceedings, the Commission can continue to work with Congress to codify FCC rules or adjudications streamlining state and local permitting processes and seek additional tools that providers can leverage to overcome state and local challenges to broadband deployment.

2. What existing authorities does the Commission already possess to prevent program producers from shutting out so-called "independent programmers" on cable television?

Section 616 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C. § 536, directs the Commission to "establish regulations governing program carriage agreements and related practices between cable operators or other multichannel video programming distributors ["MVPDs"] and video programming vendors." As directed by that provision, the Commission's program carriage rules prohibit a cable operator or other MVPD from requiring "a financial interest in any program service as a condition for carriage" of such service, from coercing a programmer to grant "exclusive" carriage rights, or from engaging in conduct that unreasonably restrains "the ability of an unaffiliated programming vendor to compete fairly" by discriminating against such vendor "on the basis of affiliation or nonaffiliation."

- a. Are those authorities being exercised by the Commission or are they largely dormant?

As directed by section 616 of the Act, the Commission established a complaint process for resolving carriage disputes, and the FCC stands ready to address such complaints when filed.

3. What can be done to improve market access for independent cable television program producers?

Promoting continued innovation and competition in the media marketplace as a whole could benefit all participants, including independent programmers, by providing consumers increased options for viewing an increased variety of programming. And working to advance universal connectivity will help ensure the widest access to Internet-based forms of video distribution.

Beyond that, if Congress wished to pursue legislative action, it could consider revisiting the Communications Act by taking a fresh look at its preferred regulatory approach in light of the significant changes in the overall media marketplace since section 616 was enacted in 1992.

4. The Federal Communications Commission is considering changes to the sharing framework designed to protect geostationary orbit satellites (GSOs) from interference from non-geostationary orbit satellites (NGSOs). Some GSO owners are concerned that this sharing framework could cause harmful interference for the subscribers who rely on them. This could mean that satellite television subscribers would experience significantly increased incidences of picture interruption and distortion as they attempt to watch programming. How is the Commission ensuring that satellite television subscribers are protected?

In the last year, the Commission has opened several rulemakings to advance the Nation's space economy and modernize rules to promote current and future innovations in space technology. This work includes an FCC rulemaking to examine the decades-old spectrum sharing regime between different types of satellite systems that may affect the development of modern commercial satellite operations and cutting edge, emerging satellite broadband. Recognizing that changes to EPFD limits in shared spectrum bands may also affect GSO operations, the Commission sought comment on potential protections for GSO operations while accommodating intensive NGSO use of shared spectrum. I look forward to reviewing the record evidence in these proceedings.

The Honorable Russ Fulcher

1. Commissioner Trusty, as you know, CBRS has become an important tool for rural broadband deployment and private wireless innovation across the country. My colleagues and I wrote to Chairman Carr earlier this year to urge the FCC to avoid disrupting the CBRS and 6 GHz bands because doing so could strand significant private sector investments and hamper connectivity in rural communities. Even increasing power levels could upset the balance. Given that CBRS's sharing framework has worked as intended and protected defense operations while enabling new commercial deployments — can you tell me your view on protecting CBRS as the FCC considers future spectrum policy?

The United States has long been a leader in innovative uses of spectrum and CBRS is an example of that. I am always committed to ensuring spectrum is put to its highest and best use, and I am not aware of any Commission-led proceeding under this Administration to walk-back the CBRS framework.

The Honorable August Pfluger

1. Commissioner Trusty, you've spoken powerfully about the importance of 6 GHz unlicensed operations to US innovation and global competitiveness. Since joining the Commission last year, you've taken a leadership role in our international advocacy, including representing the United States at the recent Worldwide Telecommunications Development Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan. Commissioner Trusty, can you describe how our advocacy at WRC-27 depends on clear messaging about the US commitment to unlicensed operations in the 6 GHz band?

We have seen significant domestic growth in WiFi and development of other innovations since the FCC opened the full 6 GHz band for unlicensed use during the first Trump Administration. Clear messaging on U.S. domestic spectrum policy at the WRC-27 will help further U.S. leadership in standards development, reduce dependence on foreign-controlled infrastructure, promote innovation, and strengthen the Nation's geopolitical influence.

2. Recently, the FCC has adopted major new rules aimed at both accelerating the deployment of subsea communication cables and enhancing their security against foreign adversaries. Subsea cables are the backbone of global communications, carrying around 99% of international internet traffic and vast amounts of financial, governmental, and strategic data. We cannot let our adversaries, namely China, gain access to and control of this critical infrastructure, as it could allow them to intercept data, influence critical communications routing, or create backdoors into sensitive traffic. How is the FCC assessing indirect control risks, such as minority ownership, vendor lock-in, or maintenance contracts tied to foreign adversaries?

The FCC is assessing these issues consistent with President Trump's Executive Order 13873 that establishes a framework for the protection of the ICT supply chain from foreign adversary risks. The Commission also works closely with national security agencies who can further inform these assessments given their added level of situational awareness and expertise on national security matters.

- a. Do you believe the U.S. should move toward a presumptive ban on PRC-origin equipment in subsea cable systems, similar to terrestrial telecom? Recent incidents in the Baltic, the Red Sea, and the Indo-Pacific suggest that cables are increasingly targets of gray-zone activity.

Equipment and services closely tied to the foreign adversaries, like China, can allow the CCP to surveil Americans, disrupt communications networks, and otherwise threaten U.S. national security. The Commission continues to make updates to the Covered List based on determinations made by national security agencies that certain equipment or services pose unacceptable risks to the national security of the United States and its citizens.

- b. How does that change the FCC's threat model?

The Commission will continue to work with national security agencies to inform threats to the security of the Nation's communications networks.

The Honorable Erin Houchin

1. My Data BRIDGE Act (H.R. 4950) directs the FCC to incorporate USDA cultivated land data into the National Broadband Map so rural coverage reflects entire farms and fields—not just a farmhouse address. Would integrating this data materially improve the map's accuracy for rural coverage and precision agriculture use cases? If so, in what specific ways? How critical are accurate, parcel-level broadband maps to ensuring rural and agricultural communities actually receive the broadband access and funding Congress intends?

It is critical that the information used to make broadband funding and policy decisions be as complete and accurate as possible. As directed by the 2018 Farm Bill, the FCC established a Task Force to review the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture. In its final report in December 2024, the Task Force recommended that the Department of Agriculture produce a map that includes mobile coverage over agricultural land. Accurate maps help policymakers to know where broadband is available and where it is not, and, in turn, where federal investments should be focused. As required by Congress, the FCC and its contractor review many data sets and incorporate new locations into the National Broadband Map on a biannual basis, which serves to consistently refine the data shown on the map to ensure it is as accurate and up to date as possible. As the FCC continues its work to improve the National Broadband Map, I'd be happy to work with Congress on future steps the FCC, the Department of Agriculture, and other stakeholders can take on mapping broadband availability on agricultural land, in whatever form that takes.

2. It's imperative to have the most accurate understanding of where there is and is not broadband service if we are to fully connect rural America. Current FCC mechanisms for measuring mobile coverage continue to fall short and is not as verified as the fiber fabric. Mobile service measurements are affected by topography and terrain which complicate efforts to ascertain exactly what is, or is not, served. Incorrect data affects everything from federal funding for future deployments to real-time emergency services capabilities. It is

critical that the federal government requires mobile service be measured using mobile metrics, not simply by stationary points which do not reflect consumer experience or actual service. Currently, the FCC permits stationary points to qualify under mobile metrics, continuing the frustrating cycle of incorrect and incomplete federal broadband data. Will you commit to the FCC requiring and using established mobile data metrics and measurements for federal programs that support mobile deployment?

The FCC's maps show mobile service in both "in vehicle" mobile environments as well as outdoor stationary environments. Providers are required to submit maps showing both environments and a consumer can challenge either or both maps. The FCC's Broadband Data Task Force continues to work on ways to improve the accuracy of the National Broadband Map, and I commit to working with my colleagues at the Commission to support those efforts and to ensure that the Map's use in policymaking reflects an accurate understanding of its content.

3. As you know at a time when demands on spectrum are increasing across the economy, the FCC has a responsibility to ensure that available spectrum is being used efficiently and in the public interest. The U.S. financial sector leads the world in innovation and technology, and to maintain that role, our nation must encourage investment in the latest communications technologies, including radio spectrum. The result of these technological enhancements can benefit Main Street investors by lowering costs and increasing efficiencies. What is the status for the Commission to adopt a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to allow parties to make use of the shortwave spectrum band (2-25 MHz) band for fixed, long-distance, non-voice communications?

I defer to the Chairman on the Commission's status regarding this issue but remain open-minded about reviewing commercial spectrum policies to ensure this critical resource is put to its highest and best use.

The Honorable Doris Matsui (D-CA):

1. How does the FCC plan to support U.S. space and satellite priorities – including for LEO constellations in which the U.S. leads the world – at the ITU and the World Radiocommunication Conference over the next two years, particularly in light of increasing Chinese influence and competition to develop space? What are the benefits of U.S. leadership at the ITU and WRC as they set global spectrum rules and satellite orbits?

The Commission will continue to coordinate with the State Department and NTIA, as well as private sector stakeholders, to develop a unified U.S. strategy that supports the Nation's space and satellite priorities at WRC-27. U.S. leadership at the ITU and WRC are foundational to our ability to promote American values, our economic competitiveness, and national security around the world.

2. The FCC is currently considering an open proceeding on SIP Interconnection. IP interconnection is key to modernizing our telecommunications networks and realizing some of the innovations which will improve consumer experience, enhance public safety via Next Generation 911, and aid in combating robocalls and robotexts. As the FCC considers this proceeding, how is the FCC working to ensure a seamless transition, and how do you plan to support these network enhancements?

In October the FCC issued an NPRM seeking comment on IP interconnection issues, including the current state of marketplace negotiations and the appropriate policy framework for FCC oversight. At the Commission's February 18 meeting it will consider a companion NPRM that would seek comment on rules governing cost recovery related to IP interconnection and the IP transition. Taken together, these proceedings will position the FCC to evaluate what legacy rules should be modified or eliminated because they stand in the way of the IP transition while also ensuring a predictable transition that enables providers to continue investing and consumers to benefit from advanced networks and services. I look forward to reviewing the record in those proceedings.

The Honorable Greg Landsman (D-OH):

1. Bearing in mind that we should not mimic China's authoritarian, communist approach, what are one or two priorities we should focus on for WRC27 and how can Congress help the FCC, the rest of the federal government, and the private sector address these priorities in Shanghai next year?

The United States delegation to WRC-27 should focus on spectrum harmonization, including for satellite and wireless applications, and promote free and fair market practices so American companies can compete internationally. In advance of WRC-27, Congress can work to promote alignment among public and private sector interests; encourage pre-WRC coordination with international allies; and ensure the U.S. delegation to the WRC-27 has the resources to support technical and diplomatic representation.

3. Is the FCC able to effectively coordinate with the other important agencies in this process – State and Commerce?

Yes.