

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS  
ON THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FORMATION OF THE  
FCC CONSUMER TASK FORCE  
January 20, 2010**

This is a big day for consumers and for the Commission. What the Chairman has just announced brings the FCC back to where it was always supposed to be—a proactive consumer protection agency. The decisions this body makes affect consumers in so many ways. Whether it's wireless devices, landline telephones, public safety or the media—there's always a consumer impact. That's why every item we process, every decision we make, needs to be examined and judged for its impact on consumers.

Too often in recent years we have lost sight of this—and it has cost consumers. It's cost them a lot. Our lack of competitive focus in telecommunications is one example and it raised consumer bills, I believe, by billions of dollars. Our blissful blessing of evermore media industry consolidation was another costly assault on consumer well-being—not to mention citizen well-being. The list goes on. Today we put in place a mechanism to discourage that kind of decision-making.

By improving coordination between and among our bureaus and offices, and by ensuring that a consumer perspective is brought to bear across the whole gamut of FCC issues, we take a huge step to ensure that our policies and rules are better attuned to the real-world needs of Americans. Considering the consumer impacts of our decisions, no matter what bureau or office they come from, will be standard operating procedure going forward. You could say it always should have been that way—but it wasn't. Now it will be.

I am pleased that our new Government and Consumer Affairs Bureau Chief, Joel Gurin, will manage this task force. He has experience, judgment and consumer commitment made-to-order for this assignment, and he will be assisted by outstanding team members from all our bureaus and offices.

So it is only fitting that he brings forward today a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* that kicks off another consumer-focused proceeding in which we expand our goal—taken up in 2003 when we implemented the Do-Not-Call registry and again in 2008 when we eliminated the expiration of the registry—of returning a measure of privacy and control to citizens, allowing each of us to choose limits on the telemarketing calls we receive. The *Notice* specifically addresses pre-recorded telemarketing calls. It tentatively concludes that harmonizing the Commission's rules, adopted pursuant to the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, with the Federal Trade Commission's recently-amended Telemarketing Sales Rule, would reduce the potential for consumer and industry confusion. I am pleased to support the item and look forward to an expeditious conclusion to the entire proceeding as quickly as we can do it. And I express my gratitude to the Bureau for its work in teeing this up for us.

The well-being of consumers needs to be front-and-center not only in the issues we address, but also in how we address them. So I heartily applaud the improvements this Commission has made over the past year in transparency and consumer engagement ***while we consider the issues***. The Commission is humming with activity: hearings, workshops, blogs, Facebook and myspace—you name it, the new FCC is on it! And more is coming. It's wonderful, isn't it?

So I think you can tell I'm pleased, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to working closely with you to realize the huge potential of what you today put in place.