

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Wireless E911 Location Accuracy Requirements*, PS Docket No. 07-114.

I want to start with two stories—two stories that illustrate why what the Commission is doing today is so important.

First story. The summer before last, Shanika Parker finished working the night shift at her job outside of Indianapolis. She was on her way home when exhaustion got the better of her. She dozed off behind the wheel. The next thing Ms. Parker knew, her car was upside down—and quickly filling with water.

Ms. Parker acted fast. She called 911 from her mobile phone. But when the operator asked where she was, Ms. Parker could only answer: “I don’t know. I don’t know. Can you please help me?”

Using location information from her mobile phone, local police were able to trace the call. Using their knowledge of the area, responding officers were able to figure out that her car slid into a pond next to an interstate on her way home. When the officers arrived on the scene, they found her overturned car. Mud was oozing through the windows and doors. Time was running out.

Fortunately, this story ends well. But by the time the police pulled Ms. Parker out from the car she had only eight inches of air left. Still, this story shows very clearly what first responders can do with the right tools—that is, with accurate location information.

Second story. Mary Thomas suffered a stroke in New York. Ms. Thomas knew something was wrong. So she mustered up the strength to call 911. But the stroke had taken its toll. Her speech was slurred. She was unable to tell the dispatcher where she was and what help she needed.

So the first responders turned to technology. The tower information for Ms. Thomas’s mobile phone gave an address for the call. But the address was wrong. It turns out that on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, it can be easy to get lost. Lots of buildings, lots of floors, lots of apartments stacked high in the sky. In fact, first responders in New York followed several false leads trying to track the call. All in all, they searched for eight hours before they found Ms. Thomas. She died the next day.

These stories illustrate very clearly what we all know intuitively. When the unthinkable occurs you want first responders to find you—no matter where you are—indoors or out—and no matter what kind of phone you use to make that call.

That is why what we do here today is so critical. The number of wireless calls to 911 is skyrocketing. In fact, more than 70 percent of 911 calls are now made from wireless phones. That is more than 400,000 calls across the country every day. This number is only going to grow. Because today, for roughly 2 in 5 households, their wireless phone is their only phone.

So the way we connect and call is changing. But until today our policies providing first responders with information about where we are when we call 911 have been stranded in the calling practices of the last century. They provide for location information for 911 calls made using wireline phones. They provide for location information for 911 calls made outdoors using wireless phones. But for calls made indoors using wireless phones your best bet would be to cross your fingers and hope and pray, because no location accuracy standards apply. This gap is unacceptable. It does not reflect the way we now reach out for help in our moment of greatest need.

Today, at long last, we take steps to fix this problem and close this gap. For the first time, we bring indoor dispatchable location into our wireless location accuracy policies. This is big—and it is bound to save lives. Because, as Steve Souder from the Fairfax County Department of Public Safety Communications suggests, before a blue and red light flashes, before a whistle on the volunteer fire station blows, before a pager rings, or an air horn blares—the front line of public safety in the United States are the people who answer your 911 call. When they have more information about where you are when you call, we are all safer. He’s right—and his words illustrate the importance of that call made by Ms. Parker in Indiana, by Ms. Thomas in New York, and by hundreds of thousands of us each and every year.

Our effort today has taken a lot of work and wrangling. Thank you to the countless first responders and the authorities at the Association of Public Safety Communications Officials International and National Emergency Number Association who helped us in this process. Your insights and assistance have been invaluable. Thank you also to the Chairman for making this effort a priority and Admiral Simpson and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for pushing this issue forward.

Finally, we owe a debt of gratitude to the bipartisan support this initiative has received from Capitol Hill. Last year, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a hearing to bring focus to this problem. Senator Schumer also pressed us to modernize our rules—and get this right. In particular, he called for us to update our policies to give first responders the information they need to help us in our hour of need. In addition, Congressman Upton and Congressman Pallone encouraged this agency to put a premium on dispatchable location—and get this done. For their support and willingness to champion this important public safety matter, we are grateful.