

January 29, 2015

**STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI
ON FCC CONSUMER HELP CENTER: A NEW CONSUMER GATEWAY**

Things are getting a little bit easier for the American consumer. Until recently, if you wanted to file a complaint with the FCC, you had to track down the right form—whether it was Form 2000D (for public safety complaints), Form 501 (for slamming complaints), Form 1088G (for unwanted calls to a cellphone), or any of the other 15 forms we used. And for some complaints, there was no form. For instance, rural Americans facing call completion problems were told to just use the form for billing complaints (Form 2000B, for the record).

No more. With the newly designed Consumer Help Center, filing a complaint—or even getting a question answered—is much, much simpler. And I’m told the new center will automate the processing of complaints, meaning consumers will be receiving help faster. That’s great news.

This comes at a particularly important time. Consumers filed 291,657 complaints with the FCC in 2013—I believe that was a record—and though we’re still compiling the data, it looks like they’re on track to beat that in 2014 (there were 229,204 in the first three quarters). So making this process even a little bit simpler is likely to redound to the benefit of hundreds of thousands of Americans each year.

I also hope we’ll take this opportunity to focus our efforts at the Commission on what consumers are complaining about. And looking at our past reports, it’s clear: Unwanted telemarketing calls in violation of the National Do-Not-Call Registry are on the rise. In fact, such complaints made up almost 40 percent of consumer complaints in our latest report—and the number of complaints jumped dramatically last year from 19,303 in the first quarter to 34,425 in the third. Let’s fix this problem.

More generally, I hope we can build on the transparency enabled by the system’s aggregation of data and track agency receipt of and responsiveness to matters other than complaints, like petitions for reconsideration and applications for review. An FCC Dashboard that included statistics on various performance metrics would promote accountability to Congress and the American public and would incentivize us to act with more dispatch.¹

I want to thank all of the FCC’s front-line staffers—here, in Gettysburg, and in the field—for being the faces and voices of the agency to the American people. And I especially want to thank those involved in this particular project: Sharon Bowers, James Brown, Cynthia Bryant, Michael Carowitz, Connie Chapman, Harrison Cox, Teresa Flasher, Aaron Garza, Dusty Laun, Kris Monteith, Renee Moore, Howard Parnell, Karl Simmonds, Mike Snyder, D’wana Terry, Brian Ulmer, Kimberly Wild, Sharon Wright, and Josh Zeldis. Your professionalism and dedication are much appreciated.

¹ Remarks of Commissioner Ajit Pai Before the Federal Communications Bar Association at 3 (Feb. 21, 2013), available at <http://go.usa.gov/SsY5>.