



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

The Lifeline Modernization Order we recently adopted takes the next major step in fostering the Commission's commitment to universal service. The Order modernizes the program to support broadband and refocuses it to meet the 21st century's communications challenges. By dramatically improving Lifeline's management and design, and putting the program on sound fiscal footing moving forward, we will help low-income Americans all across our nation connect to the Internet and the opportunities of the broadband revolution. At the same time, the Order puts in place a number of key programmatic reforms designed to protect the integrity of the Lifeline program and build on the Commission's recent efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in the program.

For the first time, qualifying low-income consumers will be allowed to apply Lifeline support to broadband service. Specifically, qualifying consumers may apply the \$9.25 per month support to stand-alone mobile or fixed broadband service as well as bundled voice and data service packages. We also ensure that low-income consumers are not relegated to second class service and have choices that allow them to get the most value for the subsidy. The Order sets minimum service standards to ensure supported services meet modern needs. These benchmarks will be phased in over time to avoid undue disruption for existing Lifeline providers and consumers.

The Commission also retained long-term support for voice service as part of voice and data bundles. The Order anticipates technological advances in the convergence of voice and data. As a result, the Commission set a 5 and one half year transition during which we will

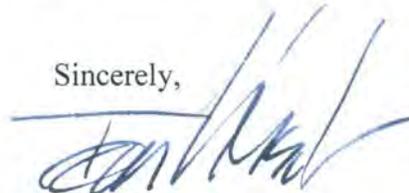
gradually increase mobile voice and data requirements and gradually decrease voice support levels. To ensure voice remains affordable, the Order requires a mid-2021 program review and report by the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) to assess the state of the Lifeline marketplace and propose recommendations to the Commission prior to the completion of the transition.

The Order also encourages competition among providers within the Lifeline program. To increase participation by broadband providers and thereby increase availability and consumer choice, the Order provides streamlined, nationwide entry to the Lifeline program for broadband providers. The item also modernizes rules to improve program flexibility, reduce burdens, and incentivize participation by providers.

The Order builds on earlier reforms that cracked down on waste, fraud, and abuse and weeded out over a billion dollars in payments to ineligible recipients. Most importantly, it establishes a National Eligibility Verifier as neutral third-party entity that removes the opportunity for providers to intentionally enroll ineligible subscribers. The Order also refines the list of federal programs that may be used to validate Lifeline eligibility to those that support electronic validation, are most accountable, and best identify people needing support. The Order also increases transparency by making program data publicly available and understandable, including subscriber counts by provider.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

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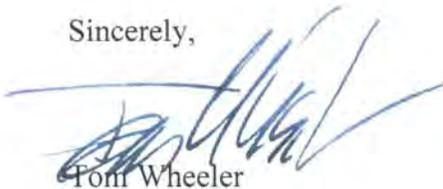
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
359 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

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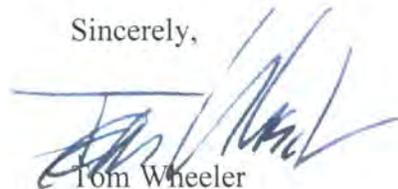
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OFFICE OF
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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer:

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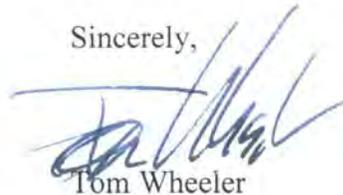
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
United States Senate
713 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Brown:

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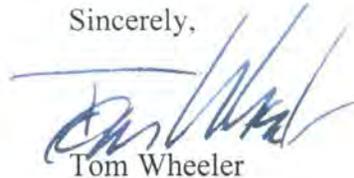
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OFFICE OF
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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

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I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

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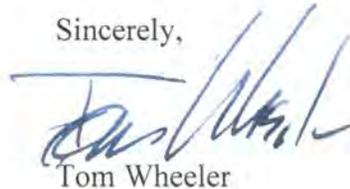
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OFFICE OF
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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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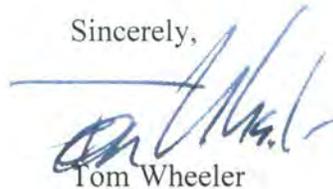
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May 12, 2016

The Honorable Al Franken
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Franken:

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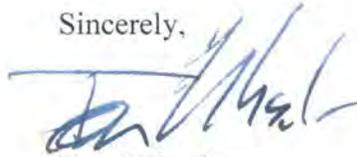
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hirono:

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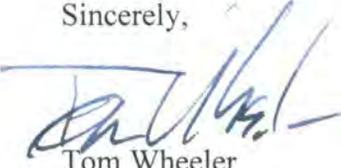
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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

The Lifeline Modernization Order we recently adopted takes the next major step in fostering the Commission's commitment to universal service. The Order modernizes the program to support broadband and refocuses it to meet the 21st century's communications challenges. By dramatically improving Lifeline's management and design, and putting the program on sound fiscal footing moving forward, we will help low-income Americans all across our nation connect to the Internet and the opportunities of the broadband revolution. At the same time, the Order puts in place a number of key programmatic reforms designed to protect the integrity of the Lifeline program and build on the Commission's recent efforts to root out waste, fraud, and abuse in the program.

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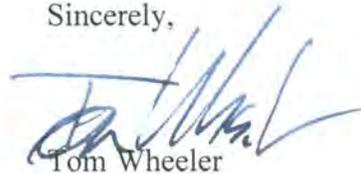
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murphy:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

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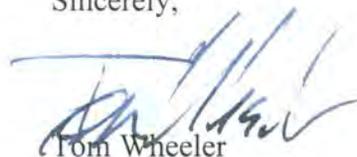
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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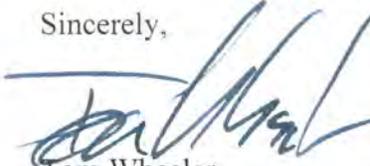
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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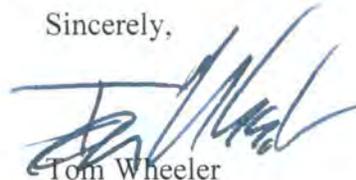
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

I wholeheartedly agree that broadband has evolved to become a necessity. Broadband is necessary to connect individuals to employment opportunities, to complete an education, and to access important services online. At a time when our economy and lives are increasingly moving online, Lifeline must do the same. That is why transforming Lifeline for the 21st century is key to the future of this vital program.

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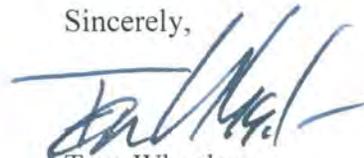
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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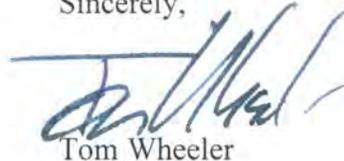
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter in support of the Commission's efforts to modernize the universal service Lifeline program. I share your desire to ensure that Lifeline continues to assist low income consumers with access to affordable communications services. Your views are very important and will be included in the record of the proceeding.

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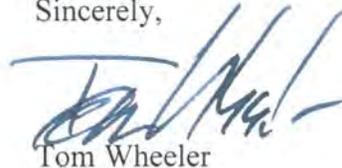
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

May 12, 2016

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

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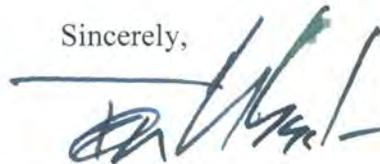
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