

**STATEMENT OF  
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BEFORE THE  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
OVERSIGHT OF THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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Good morning, Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you along with my colleagues at the Federal Communications Commission.

Let me begin by noting what is important and obvious. We began this week on the anniversary of one of our darkest days. What happened fifteen years ago on September 11 changed us all. It left an indelible mark. In my family, that mark is personal—because one of my relatives died in the Twin Towers.

But it is also important to identify what has not changed. We are resilient. We are optimistic. We are steadfast in our shared determination to move forward as individuals and as a Nation—because that is what makes us strong.

Communications networks make us strong. They strengthen our economy, give rise to digital age opportunity, and support public safety. In light of this week's anniversary, it is public safety I want to focus on today—and specifically what can be done *right now* to improve our nation's emergency number system.

911 is the first telephone number I taught my children. It is a number that every one of us knows by heart but every one of us hopes that we will never have to use. But use it we do. In fact, across the country we call 911 240 million times a year. More than 70 percent of those calls come from wireless phones rather than traditional landline phones. That means that the bulk of our emergency calls come over a different technology than the 911 system was designed to use.

This is a problem. Because while technology has changed so much in our lives, the communications systems used by our nation's 911 call centers have not fully kept pace. I know—because I have seen this firsthand in the nearly two dozen 911 call centers I have visited all across the country—from Alaska to Arkansas, California to Colorado, Nevada to New Jersey, Vermont to Virginia and many more places in between.

It's not that work is not being done. In the last two years alone, the Commission has put in place policies to facilitate texting to 911. We have devised a framework to improve the ability of 911 call centers to identify the location of emergency calls made from wireless phones.

This is progress. But what comes next is even bigger. Next generation 911 services can support a whole range of data and video communications. For those who call in an emergency, it will mean the opportunity to offer real-time video from an accident. It will mean the ability to provide first responders with instantaneous pictures of a fleeing suspect or emergency incident,

helping rural public safety officials prioritize and deploy limited resources. These capabilities can make public safety both more effective and more responsive.

But to remake the nation's 911 systems to fully reflect the digital age takes funding. Historically supporting our nations roughly 6000 911 call centers has been a local affair. There is no national program or annual federal revenue source. But, still, there are two things this Committee can do to kick-start local 911 modernization.

First, we need to end fee diversion. Approximately \$2.5 billion is collected each year by local or state authorities to support 911 service. These funds are typically from a small line item on our phone bills identified as support for 911 service. But not all states follow through and actually use these funds for 911 purposes. In fact, in the last year for which the Federal Communications Commission has data, eight states transferred funds collected for 911 to other purposes—including uses that have nothing to do with public safety. In the past, some of those uses have included overtime pay for state workers and dry cleaning services for state agencies. This has to stop.

Second, tucked into the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 is a way to kick-start 911 modernization. As you know, this legislation authorized a series of wireless spectrum auctions. These auctions, which are still ongoing, have raised billions—and the proceeds are dedicated to some initiatives that get a lot of attention, like establishing the First Responders Network Authority, assisting the relocation of broadcasters in the 600 MHz band, and reducing the deficit. But there is one program these spectrum auctions fund that has not yet gotten the glory it deserves—a program for next generation 911.

Section 6503 reinstates the joint 911 Implementation Office and authorizes a \$115 million grant program to update 911. You might be familiar with it—because this Committee helped develop this legislation. But this program has stalled and has yet to begin more than four years after Congress authorized its creation.

It is time to get this program up and running. It is the best near-term and national resource we have to help put next generation 911 in place. While these funds are limited, they can have broad impact if we use them wisely and fund next generation 911 projects that can be a blueprint for updating services in communities nationwide. And when we do—states that are short-changing their own 911 programs with fee diversion should be at the end of the line.

Thank you. I will be happy to answer any questions you might have.