



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Nanette Barragan  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1320 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Barragan:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

Regarding the *Order*, I would make several important points.

*First*, the *Order* affected only nine of the more than 900 carriers participating in the Lifeline program—that's less than 1%. Nor did the *Order* affect the designation of Lifeline broadband carriers by state commissions; that process proceeds apace.

*Second*, eight of the nine affected carriers had no Lifeline customers.

*Third*, the prior Commission disregarded the well-established process for approving applications like these. The National Tribal Telecommunications Association filed a petition for reconsideration pointing out that several of the providers never complied with their obligation under our rules to coordinate their applications with Tribes. These Tribal representatives thus requested that the designations be reversed. Moreover, two providers' designations were improperly granted prior to the public comment deadline for filing comments—that is, before the public even had a full and fair chance to weigh in on the designation. This curtailed the public's ability to participate in these proceedings and limited the Commission's ability to consider all designation criteria with a fulsome record. Whatever one thinks of the merits of these applications, that action was plainly improper.

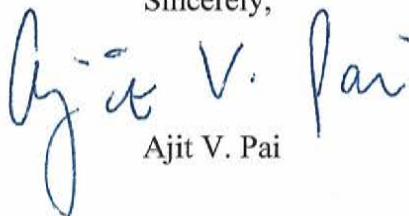
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*Lastly*, every dollar that is spent on subsidizing somebody who doesn't need the help by definition does not go to someone who does. That means that the Commission needs to make sure that there are strong safeguards against waste, fraud, and abuse before expanding the program to new providers. But our federal safeguards are insufficient: My investigation last year into these matters revealed that providers could indiscriminately override checks that are supposed to prevent wasteful and fraudulent activities. (These checks include common-sense steps like verifying the identity of would-be Lifeline recipients.) From October 2014 until June 2016, wireless resellers had overridden such safeguards 4,291,647 times in total. The investigation also uncovered other loopholes, including one that let a company claim subsidies for approximately 22,000 phantom subscribers each month in the state of Michigan. And the National Verifier—a new database intended to verify eligibility to participate in the Lifeline program—does not currently exist and will not start operating until the end of 2017. Further, it is not scheduled to cover all states until 2019. We need to make sure that safeguards are strong and effective in order to direct subsidies to American consumers who most need the help.

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

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2080 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for your letters regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

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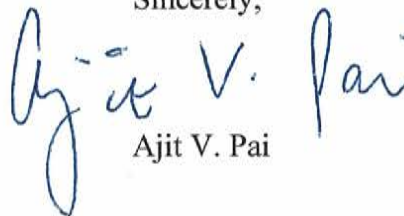
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Matt Cartwright  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1034 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cartwright:

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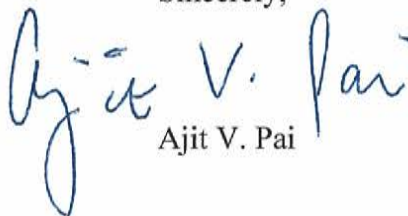
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Katherine M. Clark  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1415 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clark:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

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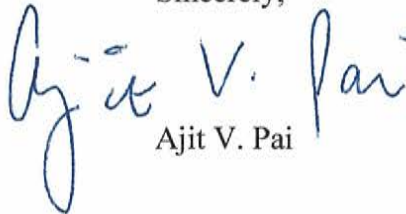
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Ajit V. Pai





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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2058 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clarke:

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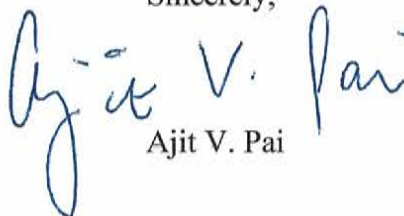
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Steve Cohen  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2404 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cohen:

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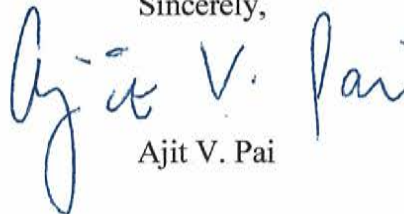
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Keith Ellison  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2263 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Ellison:

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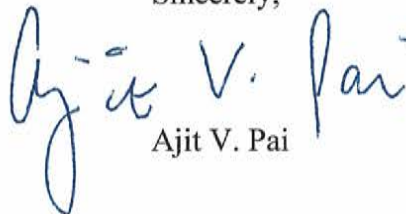
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo  
U.S. House of Representatives  
241 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

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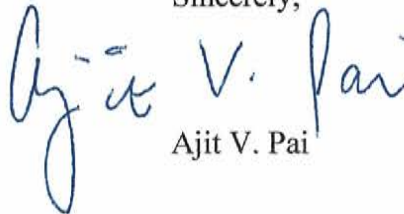
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Tulsi Gabbard  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1433 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Gabbard:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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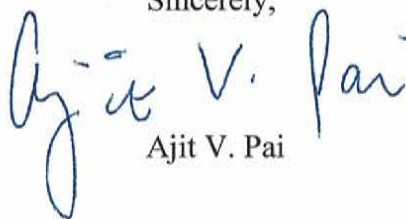
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable John Garamendi  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2438 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Garamendi:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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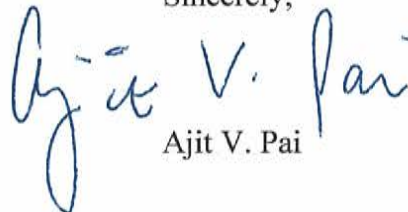
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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1511 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Grijalva:

Thank you for your letters regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

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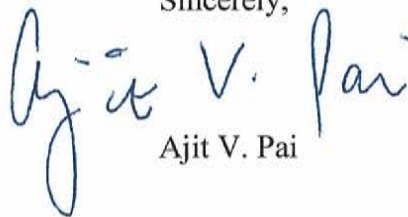
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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Pramila Jayapal  
U.S. House of Representatives  
319 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Jayapal:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

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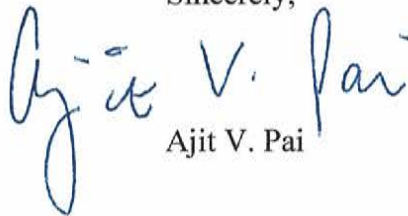
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

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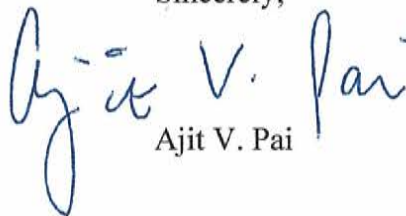
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Hank Johnson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2240 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Johnson:

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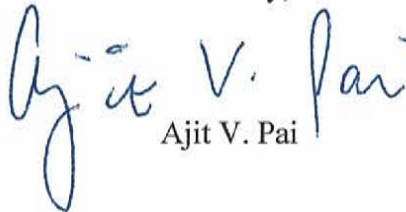
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Rohit Khanna  
U.S. House of Representatives  
513 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Khanna:

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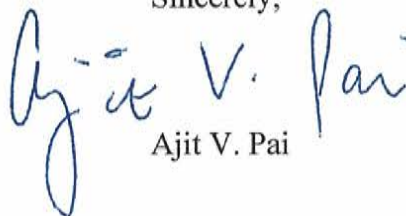
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Ron Kind  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1502 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kind:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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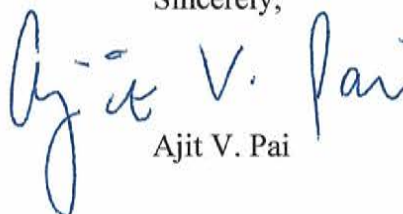
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi  
U.S. House of Representatives  
515 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Krishnamoorthi:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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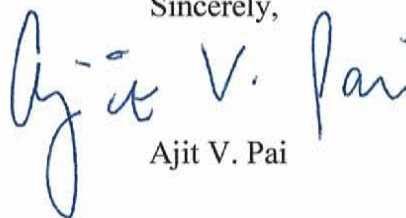
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Barbara Lee  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2267 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lee:

Thank you for your letters regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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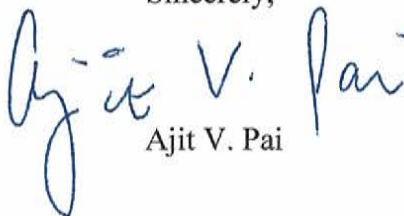
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Ajit V. Pai





OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Ted Lieu  
U.S. House of Representatives  
236 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Lieu:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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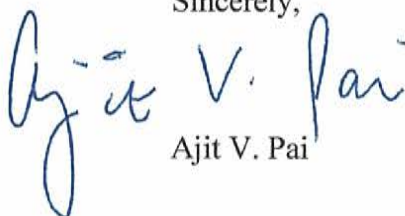
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1401 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Lofgren:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

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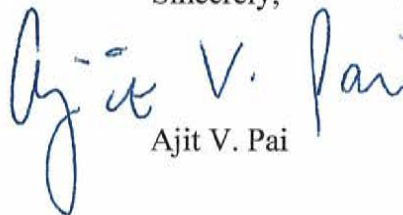
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

March 22, 2017

The Honorable Jim McGovern  
U.S. House of Representatives  
438 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman McGovern:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Wireline Competition Bureau's *Order on Reconsideration*, which affected nine companies' participation in the Lifeline program. I appreciate your views, which will be entered into the record of the proceeding.

One of my main goals as FCC Chairman is closing the digital divide. And I recognize unaffordability as a key barrier to digital opportunity. Last September, I explained when announcing my Digital Empowerment Agenda that "[a]lthough gigabit services and mobile broadband are becoming common features of wealthier, metropolitan areas, they aren't universal." There is a real digital divide in our country, and as we seek to address this problem, I believe the Lifeline program is an important tool for helping to connect all Americans.

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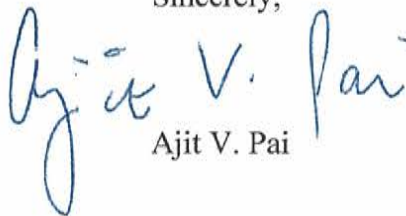
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