

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI

Re: *Amendment of Part 11 of the Commission's Rules Regarding Emergency Alert System*, PS Docket No. 15-94.

In 2014, just five days before Christmas, Officers Rafael Ramos and Wenjian Liu of the New York Police Department were shot at point-blank range in Brooklyn. The gunman emptied several rounds into the officers' heads and torsos while they were conducting a stakeout from their patrol car. Officers Ramos and Liu never had a chance. In fact, authorities said that they never even drew their weapons. Officer Ramos had just turned 40 a week earlier. Officer Liu had been married for just two months. These men in blue were two of our nation's finest.

The most frustrating part of this story is that it could have ended differently. We now know that earlier in the day, the gunman shot his girlfriend in Baltimore, then posted on Instagram that he was headed to New York City to attack police officers. After seeing the warning signs on Instagram, the Baltimore Police Department informed a precinct in Brooklyn that the gunman was "pinging in that location." But the information couldn't be relayed throughout the NYPD in time.

We'll never know for sure, of course, but Officers Ramos and Liu may have had a better chance of surviving had a Blue Alert been issued over the Emergency Alert System (EAS). A Blue Alert is similar to the Amber Alerts that we use to find and recover missing children. With a Blue Alert, state and local authorities can send warnings over broadcast, cable, satellite, and wireline video networks to quickly warn a community of imminent threats to police. Some 27 states currently use Blue Alerts over EAS to notify the public when there is actionable information related to a law enforcement officer who is missing, imminently and credibly threatened, or seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

I can't think of a better way to start off Public Safety Month here at the FCC than by considering federal action on Blue Alerts. This is important because it will help to facilitate and streamline both new and existing Blue Alert plans into a coordinated national framework across all states. This framework is consistent with the Blue Alert Act, which was enacted to encourage, enhance, and integrate the formation of voluntary Blue Alert plans throughout the United States.

We do not stand alone in this effort. Last month at the U.S. Department of Justice, I had the honor of joining Acting Associate General Jesse Panuccio, Deputy National Blue Alert Coordinator Vince Davenport, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Acting Director Thomas Homan, as well as several leaders of our nation's public safety community to announce the rollout of the National Blue Alert Network. I noted then, and reiterate today: with this step, we are not just advancing a policy. We are affirming a principle: that we have a collective responsibility to protect and serve those who protect and serve us. Today's first step towards establishing a Blue Alert code is just one example of our commitment to this principle.

I want to thank Vince Davenport of the Justice Department's Office of Community Oriented Policing Services for his leadership on this issue and his presentation this morning. And I want to give special shout-outs to Nicole McGinnis and James Wiley of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, each of whom received rave reviews from participants at the Justice Department event for their able representation of the FCC in this interagency effort. I'd also like to thank Gregory Cooke and Lisa Fowlkes, also from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau, and David Horowitz and Anjali Singh of the Office of General Counsel, for their dedication to keeping Americans safe.