

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Modernization of Payphone Compensation Rules*, WC Docket No. 17-141; *Implementation of the Pay Telephone Reclassification and Compensation Provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996*, CC Docket No. 96-128; *2016 Biennial Review of Telecommunications Regulations*, WC Docket No. 16-132.

Times truly are a-changin'. I can remember when the only way to report, say, a traffic accident by calling 9-1-1, was to find a working payphone. There must be at least one person in this room, who can recall dropping a quarter in the wall phone coin slot to call home, so your parents could pick you up after that Friday night high school football game or social (a social in my day, was a dance or school sponsored party). And—fast-forward to today—I never imagined that, at a recent social event, I would be the only one that has ever heard a telephone dial tone.

But here I am, and here we are, and in less than 20 years, the number of functioning payphones in this country has shrunk to 100,000—down from 2.1 million in 1999. This is how far and how fast we have come—relatively speaking—in mobile phone penetration and use, and this is why as these industries change, our rules must change as well. Today, we will make the payphone audit process more efficient by improving, reassessing, and eliminating outdated reporting requirements.

To be clear, this Order does not disrupt fundamental protections that ensure completing carriers are adequately compensated. It guarantees that the Commission retains its authority to investigate any pay phone compensation compliance issues. And as my fellow Commissioners have heard me say, we must not forget that there are still communities that rely on these devices in the case of emergencies. But by eliminating these unnecessary audit requirements, some of which expired 18 and 20 years ago, we will cut unnecessary regulatory expenditures, which will free up revenue that can be spent on improving quality of service in underserved communities.

And while today's actions are not targeted to this payphone customer class, I would be remiss if I did not mention the need for the FCC to further reform the inmate calling services regime. The one population in our country that still uses payphones daily, has no omnibus federal protection from exorbitant rates and fees. This Commission has the ability to act, but to date, has done nothing. That needs to change.

I, nonetheless, wish to thank the Wireline Competition Bureau for their efforts in addressing these outdated payphone regulations.