

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Rural Call Completion*, WC Docket No. 13-39.

In February, Congress passed legislation on rural call completion. It did so based on its determination that consumers continue to experience persistent problems with the completion of long-distance calls in rural areas. In too many cases, Congress found, calls simply don't go through, consumers receive false busy signals, or they are unable to hear the person on the other end of the line. Often, the problem can be traced back to what are known in the telecommunications industry as "intermediate providers." As part of an effort to limit the costs of terminating traffic, the first provider in the call chain will often select the cheapest intermediate provider, even though call quality can suffer as a result of that decision or the introduction of additional intermediate providers further down the call chain.

Congress focused on this problem by authorizing the FCC to take targeted action regarding the use of intermediate providers. So I am glad that we are initiating a Further Notice today that will implement this legislation, including by requiring intermediate providers to register with the FCC and comply with minimum service quality standards. Taking these steps will help enhance our oversight capabilities and better prevent the call completion problems we've seen to date.

I am also pleased that the Order portion of today's decision will eliminate the FCC's 2013 reporting requirements, which the record shows have not proven to be worth their costs. We replace that ineffective approach with a new monitoring requirement, which should provide better checks on the performance of intermediate providers. In this regard, I want to thank my colleagues for agreeing to edits that clarify the scope of this new monitoring requirement—changes that make clear we are focused on ensuring that covered providers make reasonable efforts to address persistent call completion problems. Moreover, part of our approach here relies on covered providers using contractual provisions to address the conduct of intermediate providers, so I also want to thank my colleagues for agreeing to establish a reasonable transition period for providers to review their contracts and implement any necessary changes. These revisions will help ensure that carriers have the flexibility to conduct monitoring in the way that works best for their respective networks, while also providing certainty about the FCC's expectations for covered providers.

With these changes, the item has my support. Thank you to the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for your work on this issue.