



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

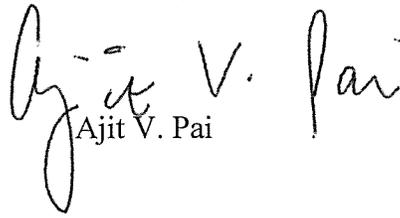
At the same time, I am deeply committed to ensuring that the Commission fulfills its obligation to be a responsible steward of the Universal Service Fund. It is critical to strengthen the Lifeline program’s efficacy and integrity by reducing the waste, fraud, and abuse that has run rampant in this program for the better part of a decade. For example, following a request for investigation by Senators Claire McCaskill and Rob Portman, the Government Accountability Office discovered 1,234,929 Lifeline subscribers who apparently were not eligible to participate in the program as well as 6,378 individuals who apparently enrolled or recertified after being reported as deceased. That limited sample alone constituted more than \$137 million in abuse each year. That’s money that could be better spent building out broadband in low-income neighborhoods and making broadband more affordable in for low-income families and veterans living in rural America on Tribal lands.

I agree with you that the National Lifeline Accountability Database and the National Verifier are important tools for eliminating waste, fraud, and abuse. But they are not the only ones, nor will they solve all the problems with the program. It simply isn’t prudent to sit idly by when hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars are at stake. To address this, in a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* accompanying the *Order*, the Commission sought comment on a wide variety of measures to improve the administration of the Lifeline program—from re-empowering state commissions to police Lifeline carriers to partnering with the states to stand up the National Verifier, from improving program audits to adopting a self-enforcing budget. We are currently reviewing the record that has been compiled in response to the Notice to determine the best path

forward, and your letter had been added to that record. The Lifeline program's goal is—or should be—to empower consumers, not companies. And that will be our lodestar as we move forward to ensure that unscrupulous companies stop abusing this important program.

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

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
B85 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

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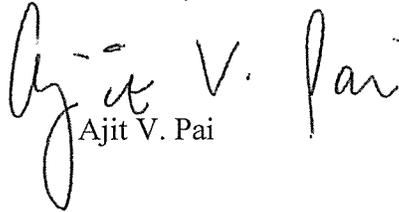
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and stylized, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

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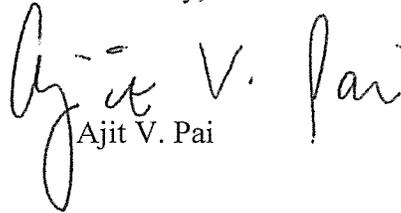
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A" and a long tail on the "i".
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

August 10, 2018

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

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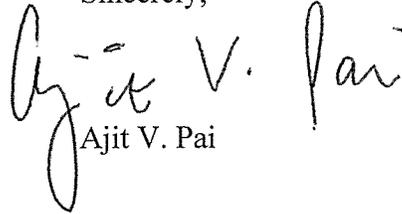
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

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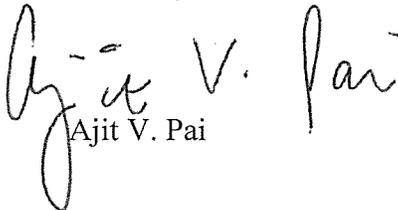
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

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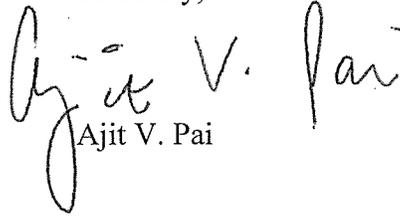
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Sincerely,



Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

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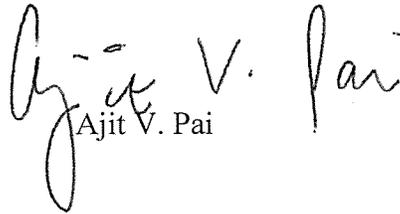
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

August 10, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

Thank you for your letter on the Lifeline program. I am committed to bridging the digital divide, and, like you, I believe the Lifeline program can help do just that.

That is why the Commission adopted the *2017 Lifeline Reform Order*, which seeks to focus Lifeline support where it is most needed and incentivize investment in networks that enable 21st century connectivity for all Americans. The *Order* increased consumer choice by eliminating restrictions that barred Lifeline consumers from changing Lifeline providers for a year. It also protected consumers by barring low-quality services that offered mobile broadband in theory but failed to do so in practice (such as Wi-Fi-only “mobile” broadband, which doesn’t help consumers who lack home broadband or aren’t otherwise near a Wi-Fi hotspot like a coffee shop).

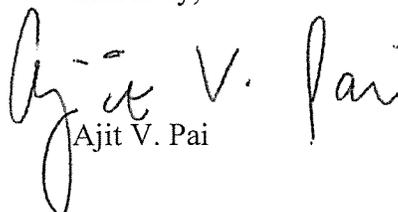
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