

**STATEMENT OF
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Good morning, Chairman Doyle, Ranking Member Latta, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

Let me begin with a story. Picture northeast Arkansas. This is a region known as the Upper Delta. It has a proud history. It was where Johnny Cash spent his childhood and Ernest Hemingway penned *A Farewell to Arms* in a barn. And its fields are known the world over for the rice they produce. But this region is also on the bleeding edge of an ugly trend—increasing maternal mortality.

You see the United States is the only industrialized nation with a growing rate of maternal mortality. Earlier this month the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that deaths from pregnancy-related causes hit women of color especially hard. And in rural communities across the country obstetric care is disappearing. Today, more than half of rural counties no longer have a hospital with a maternity ward.

The week before last I was in Little Rock, where I met a team of healthcare professionals from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences who decided that in the Upper Delta it was time to do something about pregnancy-related deaths.

They described a typical patient in the region. She was diagnosed with preeclampsia, a hypertensive disorder that is a leading cause of maternal mortality. To manage this disorder, monitoring is key. But this patient lives in a rural area. In fact, she had to drive several hours to give birth in a specialty hospital. There was no way she could make the same drive on a daily basis during the weeks after delivery.

So this team at the medical center got creative. They sent her home with a blood pressure cuff, a scale to monitor her weight, and a pulse oximeter to measure the levels of oxygen in her blood. She was told to connect all of these devices to a wireless gateway and to transmit daily readings to the medical center.

This was great—except for one critical detail. This patient had no wireless service at home. As she described it, she lived in a dead zone. So every day after

performing these rituals, she climbed in her truck, drove up to the top of a hill a mile away, and sent the data along.

This country's rising maternal mortality rate demands every possible solution. From where I sit I am searching for ways technology can help.

So I can't stop thinking about this story. It demonstrates so clearly the wonder of modern communications. It also reminds us that there are too many people in too many places in this country struggling to connect. During the past two years, I believe the Federal Communications Commission has done too little to address these problems. That's because too often the FCC has acted at the behest of the largest corporate forces that surround it, shortchanging the American public.

For starters, we do not know with certainty where broadband and wireless service is throughout the country. Our broadband maps are a mess—one cabinet official recently called them “fake news.” The FCC distributes billions each year to help build broadband but it is wasteful and irresponsible for the agency to do so without having a truly accurate picture of where those resources should go.

On top of that, we have done too little to fix robocalls. At the start of this Administration, consumers received roughly 2 billion robocalls a month. That number now exceeds 5 billion. For the past two years the FCC has been holding workshops and summits instead of holding bad actors responsible. This morning the Chairman finally shared a plan to help reduce these nuisance calls. I sincerely hope it is not too little, too late.

But perhaps the FCC is now best known for its misguided effort to roll back net neutrality. As a result of this decision, your broadband provider now has the right to block websites, throttle online services, and censor online content. That doesn't sound good to me—and consumers across the country agree. In fact, 86 percent of the American public supports net neutrality. This agency got it wrong—and I hope that we take a signal from your efforts in the Save the Internet Act and when given a chance with a court remand—take the opportunity to get it right.

Finally, public safety is paramount. But this agency has been totally silent about press reports that demonstrate that for a few hundred dollars shady middlemen can tell you your location within a few hundred meters based on your wireless phone data. I don't recall consenting to this surveillance when I signed up for wireless service—and I bet neither do you. This is an issue of national and personal security. We need to be upfront with the American people about just what is going on.

So I wrote every major wireless carrier and asked them to confirm that they have stopped this kind of sale of our wireless location data. Moreover, I asked them to explain just what has happened to any data that has already been made available to location aggregators or anyone else. I expect to receive those responses today and will gladly share them with the Members of this Committee.

In closing, I believe communications policy can create opportunity—and help solve problems like maternal mortality. I think the way to do this is for the FCC to change course—and put the public first. I look forward to answering any questions you have.