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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

<http://appropriations.senate.gov>

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May 1, 2019

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

Ensuring that taxpayers' hard-earned money is well-spent is one of our most important responsibilities as members of the Appropriations Committee. Accordingly, we are deeply concerned by frivolous and wasteful spending on premium-class airline tickets for government employees. Independent watchdogs, including the Government Accountability Office and inspectors general, have long warned of serious breakdowns in internal controls and the potential for hundreds of millions of dollars in improper purchases.¹

The Federal Travel Regulation (FTR) generally prohibits Federal employees from using first-class and business-class airline travel, with certain limited exceptions.² Furthermore, a new provision in the *Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2019* prohibits the use of appropriated funds in contravention of this regulation.³ Both the underlying policy and the funding prohibition are intended to promote the economy and efficiency of our government and to protect taxpayer dollars.

The Subcommittee is evaluating compliance with the FTR and section 632 at agencies within its jurisdiction. This oversight may inform consideration of additional legislative action, including new provisions in future appropriations bills. To assist in this matter, please provide the following information:

1. Please describe, with specificity and detail, the FCC policies for ensuring compliance with sections 301-10.121 through 301-10.125 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations.
2. Please describe, with specificity and detail, the FCC policies for ensuring compliance with section 632 of the *Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2019*.

¹ See, e.g., Gov't Accountability Office, Premium Class Travel: Internal Control Weaknesses Governmentwide Led to Improper and Abusive Use of Premium Class Travel, GAO-07-1268 (Sept. 2007).

² 41 C.F.R. §§ 301-10.121–10.125.

³ Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act, 2019, Pub. L. 116-6, div. D, sec. 632.

3. For fiscal year 2017 through the first two quarters of fiscal year 2019, please identify:
- a. Each instance of non-coach-class airline travel.
 - b. The FTR exemption under which the FCC authorized or approved each instance of non-coach-class airline travel, including the date of authorization or approval.
 - c. The total obligations associated with each instance of non-coach-class airline travel.
 - d. Any instances of non-coach-class airline travel not authorized or approved in a manner consistent with the FTR.

Please note that certain exemptions under the FTR implicate medical or disability status; accordingly, please ensure that your responses do not include any personally-identifiable information relating to medical or disability exemptions. We respectfully request a response by May 31, 2019.

Sincerely,



Senator John Kennedy
Chairman
Subcommittee on Financial Services
and General Government
Committee on Appropriations



Senator Christopher Coons
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Financial Services
and General Government
Committee on Appropriations