

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Cable Service Change Notifications*, MB Docket No. 19-347; *Modernization of Media Regulation Initiative*, MB Docket No. 17-105; *Amendment of the Commission's Rules Related to Retransmission Consent*, MB Docket No. 10-71.

Few Americans have heard of the term “retransmission consent.” It is one of those wonky and lawyerly things we bandy about in these halls and in this town. Fewer still know that a quarter of a century ago Congress prohibited retransmitting a broadcast television station’s signal without the station’s consent—and at the same time directed parties negotiating for this consent to do so in good faith.

But far too many Americans know what happens when retransmission consent negotiations go wrong. They turn on the television, hoping to watch the news, their favorite show, or the big game and instead are stuck with a dark screen. They may not know how and why retransmission consent negotiations between broadcasters and their cable or satellite company have failed, but they know a blackout means they are not getting the programming they paid for.

The Federal Communications Commission has long had rules that govern these negotiations. When they fail, our rules require cable providers to give their subscribers notice of a possible change in service 30 days in advance.

The purpose behind this rule is clear. We want consumers to have advance notice of any disruption in service. But we also need to ensure this rule works in the real world. Right now our approach is absolute, so it requires alerting subscribers to ongoing negotiations that often get resolved in the final week, days or hours of a retransmission consent carriage contract—and never even lead to a dark screen. So with the media marketplace evolving, it makes sense to take a fresh look at these rules. But I think when we do we need to ensure that consumers come first. Their voices need to be heard too—because they are the ones paying for this service. Let’s not forget that. And to this end, I want to thank my colleagues for making some changes to today’s decision, including removing heavy-handed tentative conclusions and including additional questions at Commissioner Starks’ request. I look forward to the record that develops.