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For Immediate Release

**COMMISSIONER STARKS AND U.S. REPRESENTATIVE BRENDA LAWRENCE
(MI-14) ANNOUNCE CONNECTING MICHIGAN: FROM INTERNET INEQUALITY
TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

WASHINGTON, May 5, 2020—On May 7, 2020, at 1 p.m. (ET), U.S. Representative Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14) and FCC Commissioner Geoffrey Starks will virtually host *Connecting Michigan: From Internet Inequality to Digital Equity*. This event will explore how the digital divide has exacerbated already existing inequities that impact the city of Detroit and other similarly situated cities in Michigan and throughout the United States. Panelists will present solutions for addressing the digital divide on a local, state, and federal level and will particularly focus on the urgent matter of connecting children, low-income communities, and communities of color to affordable and reliable broadband. This hour-long event will be livestreamed at www.fcc.gov/live.

“In Detroit, nearly half (40%) of the population has no internet connection of any kind, making it impossible for students and employees to continue their schooling and work remotely. This lack of high-speed internet access is being felt even more acutely than normal due to COVID-19. The ongoing spread of COVID-19 has disrupted daily life and made clear that high-speed internet access is not a luxury, but a necessity. At a time when Congress is discussing massive investments in infrastructure, we must ensure that broadband is part of the conversation,” said Congresswoman Brenda L. Lawrence (MI-14).

“The COVID-19 pandemic exposed inequities that impact communities of color and low-income communities across this nation, including access to affordable broadband. All of our communities, including major metropolitan areas such as Detroit, need and deserve equitable access to high-speed internet. Broadband impacts every aspect of our lives including access to education, employment, and civic participation. I look forward to centering the needs of Detroit as we explore best practices for addressing internet inequality,” said Commissioner Geoffrey Starks.

Confirmed Panelists

- U.S. Representative Elissa Slotkin (MI-08)
- Michigan Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist II
- Joshua Edmonds, City of Detroit
- Amina Fazlullah, Common Sense Media
- Mike Muse, The Mike Muse Show on SiriusXM
- Angela Siefer, National Digital Inclusion Alliance

Advance registration is not required. Audio/video coverage of the meeting will be broadcast live with open captioning over the Internet from the FCC's web page at www.fcc.gov/live. The FCC's webcast is free to the public.

In addition to open captioning, reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. Include a description of the accommodation you will need and tell us how to contact you if we need more information. Make your request as early as possible. Last minute requests will be accepted but may be impossible to fill. Send an e-mail to fcc504@fcc.gov or call the Consumer & Governmental Affairs Bureau at 202-418-0530 (voice), 202-418-0432 (TTY).

For additional information about the virtual event, please contact Alisa Valentin in the Office of Commissioner Geoffrey Starks (202) 418-2500 or Alisa.Valentin@fcc.gov.

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