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For Immediate Release**COMMISSIONER STARKS ISSUES STATEMENT ON
FCC'S EARLY CAREER STAFF DIVERSITY INITIATIVE**

WASHINGTON, September 10, 2020 — Commissioner Starks has issued the following statement on the Commission's Early Career Staff Diversity Initiative:

“Mary Church Terrell, racial justice and women’s rights activist, coined the popular phrase ‘lifting as we climb.’ As a Black Commissioner at the FCC, I believe my responsibility is to do just that. Throughout my time at the Commission, I have been committed to advocating for equity in the policies we implement. And in the wake of the larger movement for racial justice, it is especially important for the Commission to do its part to advance policies that center our most marginalized and create opportunities internally for our agency to ensure we have more diverse voices at the table.

With the Commission’s Early Career Staff Diversity Initiative, there will now be a select group of paid internships offered at the FCC year-round. Therefore, our internship program, once out of reach for many, will now be an attainable opportunity for those who otherwise find themselves financially unable to work in Washington for the semester or the summer. The time is now to usher in a diverse generation of policy advocates in the communications sector in order to create meaningful change for our shared future.

Additionally, I’m thrilled that the Commission will devote resources to increase recruitment from HBCUs and other Minority Serving Institutions for our internship and early career programs. Half of my advisors are women of color and HBCU graduates. Their training at those institutions helps to shape my policy agenda. Just a few short months ago, I hosted an HBCU Roundtable where I heard from Presidents and leaders of HBCUs across the country, and our online audience was reminded of the rippling effects those institutions have on creating a just and equitable society. I also heard from these leaders a fierce desire to blaze new career pathways for their students, including in the tech and telecom sector.

My goal for this initiative is for our communications sector to better reflect the diversity of people across the country. We can’t produce effective communication policies if we don’t accurately account for the diversity of issues Americans face, and realize that is part of our collective strength.

I look forward to collaborating with Chairman Pai and Commission staff on this Initiative. I want to look back years from now and see the advancements we've made in this space for the betterment of the American people."

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).