

**REMARKS OF  
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
JANUARY 25, 2021**

Good afternoon. It is an absolute honor to address you today as Acting Chairwoman. As you may know, last week President Biden designated me to take the reins of the Federal Communications Commission. I thank the President for the opportunity to lead this great agency at a time when its work is more important than ever before.

The FCC staff is not just uncommonly talented and knowledgeable about communications law and policy, it's also an exceptional group of public servants. I think public service is a special calling.

I also like to think it runs in my family. I grew up mostly in New England, with pitstops in Southern Illinois and Northern New Jersey along the way. My father served in the Air Force and later went on to a career as a nephrologist in Hartford, Connecticut. For three decades he ran the city's clinic for hypertension and kidney failure. My mother spent over two decades helping run a soup kitchen. And my grandfather before them served in the United States Customs Service right here in Washington. My great grandfather before that served the public in a different way—he swept the streets of New York.

As some of you may know, as a young lawyer I worked at the agency as staff. I then served in Commissioner Copps' office before going on to work as counsel to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation under the leadership of Senator Inouye and later Senator Rockefeller. So when I was first sworn in as a Commissioner, it felt like coming home. Because the fact of the matter is that we are a family here at the FCC, too. We share professional accomplishments. We celebrate life's events together. We weather uncertain times together. But above all, we work hard together toward the same goal—advancing the public interest.

I know that doing all of this during the last year has been difficult. It seemed like overnight our daily routines pivoted from commuting to the office to working from kitchen tables and living rooms. We've all had to adjust to new ways of being that help keep us safe. All of this means many of us haven't been together in nearly a year and I know I miss seeing you in the halls, grabbing coffee, and convening in our meeting rooms.

At home I find myself navigating this new normal, speaking at a video conference one moment, organizing a call the next, and reading the work of the agency all while also serving as chief Wi-Fi fixer and snack-maker in my household. In other words, I know this time is challenging.

This pandemic is not easy. If this virus has touched you or your family, know that you have my support and the support of the agency. Your safety and security are paramount.

To that end, I want to note that my predecessor did an exemplary job of keeping the agency staff informed and safe. I want to assure you that the existing remote work policies will not be disturbed by this transition.

As difficult as it is, this pandemic has also demonstrated how important our work is at the FCC. Because as a nation we need connections—physical and digital—that strengthen our mutual bonds. We benefit from communications that reach all and help us work, learn, be informed, enlightened, and entertained. And we need connections that can break down barriers that for too long have held too many back.

As if on cue, a new appropriations law has provided this agency with authority to help do just that. Congress directed us to establish an Emergency Broadband Benefit to expand access to high-speed connections and assist those struggling in the ongoing economic crisis. It tasked the agency with expanded support for telehealth and provided funding that will make our networks more powerful and more secure.

These efforts surely will take up time in the next few weeks, but they only scratch the surface. We have work to do to put consumers first. We have work to do to support digital equity, especially in communities that have been overlooked and underserved for too long. We need to advance communications policies that keep the public safe and cybersecure. We have work to do to continue our history-making wireless and auction policies that serve as a global model. We have work to do to build bridges and find common ground with our state, local, and Tribal partners. We have work to do to ensure that our functional equivalency policies live up to our responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. We have work to do to keep media policies current, while also honoring our longstanding values of competition, localism, and diversity. We have work to do to ensure that all students have the internet access they need for a fair shot at 21<sup>st</sup> century success, no matter who they are or where they live. And we have work to do to ensure open, reliable, and affordable broadband reaches 100% of this country—rural areas, urban areas, and everything in between.

All of this means every single person at this agency has something to contribute. From the dedicated staff in our field offices to the professionals that keep our agency running in Washington to the attorneys, engineers, and economists that populate our offices and Bureaus, know that your work matters. It makes a difference.

Finally, I'd like to close by recognizing Commissioner Carr, Commissioner Starks, and Commissioner Simington. This agency is well-served by these men and their contributions, their interests, and their public service. I look forward to working with each of them in the days ahead.

We have a lot to do. I can't wait to get started. Thank you.