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For Immediate Release**COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS
APPLAUDS EMERGENCY BROADBAND BENEFIT RULES**

WASHINGTON, February 25, 2021—Today, The Federal Communications Commission [announced](#) the unanimous adoption of the Order establishing the Emergency Broadband Benefit. Commissioner Starks issued the following statement:

“Nearly nine months ago, I joined civil rights leaders in authoring an essay proclaiming: ‘there is a broadband emergency in America,’ particularly in communities of color. I am proud to approve the rules implementing the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program—the largest COVID-emergency broadband program to date. As I have said many times over the last few weeks, I have great expectations for this program. If we are successful—and we must be—the Emergency Broadband Benefit will reach more disconnected low-income people and households of color than any previous FCC effort to close the digital divide.

“In developing these rules, I have focused on making the program work well for our country’s highest poverty communities. I thank my colleagues for working with me to develop a streamlined process for onboarding families with children who attend schools that participate in meal programs under the Community Eligibility Provision. I also appreciate their support for my proposal to require affirmative consent from households to continue service during the final month of the program if they are to receive only a partial discount on services. For millions of struggling families, an unexpected \$25 bill can be a lot. Requiring providers to seek an opt-in ensures families will not be forced to make big sacrifices to pay an unwelcome bill or end up with an unpaid balance to a provider that potentially locks them out of future broadband opportunities.

“Although this year has shed light on the enormous connectivity obstacles faced by so many families, it has also revealed the extraordinary efforts communities have taken to promote connectivity among our most vulnerable populations. I am hopeful that the Emergency Broadband Benefit will support these efforts and serve as a substantial step toward a future where all Americans have access to high-quality, affordable broadband.”

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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).