

**STATEMENT OF
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Schools and Libraries Universal Support Mechanism*, CC Docket No. 02-6, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (September 30, 2021).

An hour north and a little east of Albuquerque lies the Santo Domingo Pueblo reservation. It's near the dry hills of Sandoval County, a place with a serene, quiet beauty that feels a lifetime away from the bustle and traffic of the city.

That remoteness comes at a cost. Like in too many other Tribal communities, broadband access is scarce. So it was a big deal when several years ago the Santo Domingo Pueblo Library got connected to high-speed service. Shortly after this happened, I visited with then Congressman, now Senator Ben Ray Luján. Tribal leadership was present, as were parents and kids, as well as the librarian—a powerhouse who had turned the library into a bustling activity center. It wasn't just the expanded services she was able to provide in the facility. The Santo Domingo Pueblo Library was connected to a group of other Tribal libraries in the northern half of the state. It was a network that strengthened community, culture, and the local economy. It was awesome.

These New Mexico libraries got connected because they got a lift from the E-Rate program at the Federal Communications Commission. It's just the kind of effort that that this program was built to make possible. But here's the thing—because of a quirk in our rules not all Tribal libraries are able to use this program. If the Tribal library is not designated as eligible from a state library administrative agency, they are precluded from participation in E-Rate. This means that some libraries are blocked from E-Rate because of jurisdictional sovereignty.

That's a wrong that Congress saw fit to right with the Museum and Library Services Act three years ago. I'm proud to say that when we established the related Emergency Connectivity Fund rules this year, we made a point of not repeating this problem. But now we need to clean up our E-Rate rules and make it possible for more Tribal libraries to benefit from this program. It is an important part of our ongoing effort to bring broadband to everyone, everywhere.

For their work to connect schools and libraries across the country and their efforts to bring broadband to more Tribal libraries in more places, I want to thank Allison Baker, Kate Dumouchel, Sue McNeil, Kris Monteith, Mark Nadel, Ryan Palmer, Johnnay Schrieber, Matt Uvas, and Gregory Vadas of the Wireline Competition Bureau; Malena Barzilai, Elizabeth Lyle, Richard Mallen, Linda Oliver, and Jeffrey Steinberg of the Office of General Counsel; Matthew Duchesne, Barbara Esbin, and Sayuri Rajapakse of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; and Patrick Brogan, Eugene Kiselev, Kenneth Lynch, Mark Montano, Eric Ralph, Michelle Schaefer, and Emily Talaga of the Office of Economics and Analytics.