

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018*, WC Docket No. 18-336, Report and Order (November 18, 2021).

Suicide is all too common in this country, particularly among young people in at-risk communities. Over the last two decades, the rate of suicide for young girls has tripled. We have seen similar increases in suicide from Black youth and we know LGBTQ youth are nearly five times as likely to attempt suicide as their heterosexual peers. Plus, young people who are deaf or hard of hearing are far more likely than their hearing peers to contemplate ending their own lives.

These truths are painful. Because these young people deserve a future. They deserve support. And that support should be simple to access. Today we help make that possible. We were already on course to make the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline an easy-to-remember three-digit code—988—available nationwide on July 16, 2022. But to date the plan had been to make this code available only for traditional voice calls. We change that here and now. We require carriers to route 988 texts to the Lifeline, too. We do this because we know that millions of us, but especially young people and those with disabilities, are more likely to text than call when they are in crisis. The bottom line is it shouldn't matter if you make a voice call or send a text message because we should connect people in crisis to the resources they need, no matter how they communicate.

It is important to note the critical role of the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs in this effort. They oversee the Lifeline and the Veterans Crisis Line, both of which are available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. So until July 16, 2022, please call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 if you need immediate help. Service members, Veterans, and their families may reach the Veterans Crisis Line by calling 1-800-273-8255 and pressing 1 or by texting 838255. I am grateful to these agencies for their feedback and support and want them to know we will continue to work with our federal partners to make the transition to 988 a success.

I also want to express my gratitude to the staff for their work on this issue, including Pam Arluk, Allison Baker, Emily Caditz, Elizabeth Cuttner, Jesse Goodwin, Heather Hendrickson, Dan Kahn, Melissa Kirkel, Jaime McCoy, Kris Monteith, Zach Ross, and Michelle Sclater of the Wireline Competition Bureau; Robert Aldrich, Diane Burstein, Eliot Greenwald, Mika Savir, Michael Scott, Suzy Rosen Singleton, Richard Smith, Kristi Thornton, and Bill Wallace of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Brenda Boykin, Ken Carlberg, John Evanoff, David Furth, Rasoul Safavian, and Rachel Wehr of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau; Garnet Hanly, George Leris, Susannah Larson, Catherine Schroeder, Thuy Tran, and Matthew Warner of the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Patrick Brogan, Stacy Jordan, Eugene Kiselev, Eric Ralph, and Emily Talaga of the Office of Economics and Analytics; and Terry Cavanaugh, Doug Klein, Rick Mallen, Linda Oliver, Paula Silberthau, and Anjali Singh of the Office of General Counsel.