

**Carr Applauds Senators Fischer and Hickenlooper “Defend Our Networks Act”**  
*Bipartisan Bill Would Ensure Huawei, ZTE Gear Fully Replaced*

WASHINGTON, DC, April 21, 2023—Today, Senator Fischer and Senator Hickenlooper introduced the bipartisan “Defend Our Networks Act.” Their legislation would use a portion of unobligated emergency COVID-relief funds to address a pressing budget shortfall in the Federal Communications Commission’s Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Reimbursement Program. This program, commonly known as the “Rip and Replace Program”, was created at the direction of Congress to reimburse small, rural internet service providers for costs incurred in the removal, replacement, and disposal of equipment and services provided by Chinese-state backed entities Huawei and ZTE. In July 2022, the FCC announced the program faced a budget shortfall of approximately \$3 billion.

Commissioner Carr issued the following statement in support of the legislation:

“I applaud Senator Fischer and Senator Hickenlooper for their strong leadership on an issue that is vital for both national security and rural connectivity. As a government, we have taken the smart step of ordering the removal of high-risk equipment from Huawei and ZTE—gear that proliferated in rural communities near some of our military’s most sensitive facilities. Currently, a shortfall in our Rip and Replace funding threatens the success of this initiative so I am pleased to see bipartisan support in Congress for closing this gap. Senator Fischer and Senator Hickenlooper have crafted a commonsense bill that would strengthen communications networks in rural communities and bolster our national security.”

###

**Office of Commissioner Brendan Carr**  
[www.fcc.gov/about/leadership/brendan-carr](http://www.fcc.gov/about/leadership/brendan-carr)

**Media Contact: Greg Watson**  
**(202) 418-0658 or [greg.watson@fcc.gov](mailto:greg.watson@fcc.gov)**