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For Immediate Release

FCC CHAIRWOMAN CALLS ON AGENCY TO HELP STOP ABUSERS FROM USING CONNECTED CARS TO HARASS AND INTIMIDATE THEIR PARTNERS

Proposal Would Examine How the FCC Can Ensure Car Manufacturers and Wireless Carriers Are Taking Steps to Assist Abuse Survivors

WASHINGTON, February 28, 2024—FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel today called on the agency to help stop abusers from using connectivity tools in vehicles to harass and intimidate their partners. Her proposal would examine how the agency can use existing law to ensure car manufacturers and wireless service providers are taking steps to assist abuse victims and seek comment on additional steps the Commission can take to safeguard domestic violence survivors. It follows multiple [media reports](#) of smart car services being used to stalk and harm survivors of violence and abuse.

“A car is a critical lifeline that can give survivors a way to escape their abusers, gain independence, and seek support,” **said Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “Survivors of domestic abuse shouldn’t have to choose between giving up their vehicle and feeling safe. We must ensure car manufacturers and wireless carriers understand the full impact of the connectivity tools in new vehicles and how these applications can be used to stalk, harass, and intimidate.”

Last year, the Commission was charged with implementing the Safe Connections Act. This bipartisan law provides the FCC with authority to assist survivors of domestic violence and abuse with secure access to communications. In the first rules implementing this statute, the agency [required](#) covered providers to separate phone lines linked to family plans where the abuser is on the account. With this option, survivors can safely separate from family plans and keep their phone and phone number—keeping them connected to their friends, family, and supporters.

In January of this year, Chairwoman Rosenworcel [wrote](#) to auto manufacturers as well as wireless service providers to seek their help in protecting domestic abuse survivors from the misuse of connected car tools by abusers.

If adopted by a vote of the full Commission, the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking circulated to the Commissioners today would seek comment on the types and frequency of use of connected car services that are available in the marketplace today. It asks whether changes to the Commission’s rules implementing the Safe Connections Act are needed to address the impact of connected car services on domestic violence survivors. And it seeks comment on what steps connected car service providers can proactively take to protect survivors from the misuse of connected car services.

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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).