



## OFFICE OF CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR

### **Carr Proposals Would End FCC's Unlawful Biden-Era Expansion of COVID Spending Program**

*Actions Would Reverse Prior FCC Decisions to Fund Unsupervised Screen Time for Kids*

WASHINGTON, September 3, 2025—Today, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr asked his Commission colleagues to vote on two items that would reverse the agency's unlawful, Biden-era decisions to expand COVID spending programs. Those FCC decisions spent scarce taxpayer dollars on funding unsupervised screen time for kids without accounting for the significant attendant risks.

Specifically, Chairman Carr circulated for vote a declaratory ruling that would overturn the FCC's 2023 decision to fund unsupervised Wi-Fi use on school buses. He also circulated an order on reconsideration that would reverse the FCC's 2024 decision to fund Wi-Fi hotspots that kids or library patrons could use outside of schools and libraries. As explained in the items, the prior FCC decisions plainly exceeded the FCC's authority, which Congress limited to funding connections at schools and libraries. Those prior agency actions also represented unreasonable policy choices given the record evidence, poor stewardship of scarce funds, and invited waste, fraud, and abuse.

Chairman Ted Cruz has led the successful effort in the Senate to reverse the harmful impacts of these Biden-era overreaches.

#### **Chairman Carr issued the following statement:**

"During COVID-19, Congress passed a law that expressly authorized the FCC to fund Wi-Fi hotspots for use outside of schools and libraries. When that program ended, so did the FCC's authority to fund those initiatives. Nonetheless, the Biden-era FCC chose to expand its E-Rate program to fund those initiatives long after the COVID-19 emergency ended—and do so in plain violation of the limits Congress imposed on the FCC's authority. Indeed, the prior FCC eliminated many of the safeguards that Congress placed on those programs. The FCC also failed to demonstrate that these funding decisions would advance legitimate classroom or library purposes. I dissented from both decisions at the time, and I am now pleased to circulate these two items, which will end the FCC's illegal funding unsupervised screen time for young kids."

#### **Chairman Cruz issued the following statement:**

"I'm pleased that the FCC is moving to protect both taxpayers and parents' ability to decide what their children can access online. The Biden FCC hotspot program endangered kids, duplicated existing federal funding, and violated the law. Kudos to Chairman Carr for moving to undo the Biden hotspot program and protect children, but now it's time for Congress to step up and codify this change. In May, the Senate passed my Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution overturning the illegal Biden hotspot rule. I urge the House to act on the resolution and prevent this or similar harmful rules in the future."

#### **Additional Background Information:**

The FCC's 2023 *School Bus Wi-Fi Declaratory Ruling* expanded the agency's universal service program to fund Wi-Fi on school buses. The declaratory ruling circulated today would reverse that decision and find that funding Wi-Fi on school buses both exceeds the FCC's statutory authority and does not promote sound policy choices.

The FCC's 2024 *Wi-Fi Hotspots Order* expanded the universal service program to fund hotspots that school kids or library patrons could use outside of a school or library. The order on reconsideration circulated today finds that the FCC lacked legal authority for this expansion and that the agency failed to properly justify its decision.

If adopted, today's actions will find that permitting funding for the off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots, including on school buses, exceeds the statutory authority provided to the Commission in Section 254 of the Communications Act. In addition, the Universal Service Administrative Company will be directed to deny pending funding year 2025 requests for E-Rate funding for the off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots and Wi-Fi on school buses as these services will be determined to be ineligible.

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