

Keynote of FCC Commissioner Olivia Britt Trusty

9th Annual Former FCC Leadership Symposium

MMTC

As Prepared for Delivery

7/9/2026

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you to MMTC for the invitation and for the opportunity to join you today. I would like to offer a special thank you to Robert Branson for his leadership and for the important work MMTC continues to do to advance opportunity, innovation, and access throughout the communications and technology sectors.

It is truly a pleasure to be here among so many distinguished former FCC leaders, communications policymakers, industry representatives, advocates, and friends.

Last month, marked one year since I was sworn in as an FCC Commissioner. And rather than focus on any single policy issue today, I thought I would share a few reflections from my first year at the Commission and then offer some thoughts on what lies ahead.

Before joining the FCC, I spent years working on communications policy on Capitol Hill. Like many people who come to the Commission, I thought I had a fairly good understanding of the agency.

Then I arrived.

I quickly learned that there is a difference between understanding the FCC and experiencing the FCC – and, it has been a lot of fun.

Upon my arrival at the Commission, I organized my work around three main priorities: achieving universal connectivity, strengthening network security and resilience, and advancing U.S. leadership in next-generation technologies.

Those priorities have served as a useful guidepost, but my experiences at the Commission have reinforced just how interconnected they are.

Connectivity is not as meaningful if networks are not secure or resilient. When it comes to network security and resilience, both are increasingly dependent on technological innovation to stay ahead of evolving threats and other disruptions. And America's ability to lead in next-generation technologies depends on our ability to connect communities, foster investment, and create an environment where innovation can thrive.

My first year provided a remarkable opportunity to see these issues up close and help advance the Commission's work during a period of rapid technological change.

Some of my most valuable experiences have occurred outside of Washington, DC.

In the past twelve months, I have traveled to more than fifteen states meeting with communications providers, broadcasters, technology companies, and engineers, as well as public safety officials, community leaders, and consumers.

One of the greatest privileges of serving in this position has been seeing firsthand the extraordinary innovation taking place across our country. I have been consistently impressed by the ingenuity and commitment of the people driving these advances forward.

Ultimately, my visits across the country have called attention to something that can occasionally get lost in policy debates.

Behind every proceeding, every filing, and every docket are people working to connect Americans, strengthen communities, and create opportunities for the future.

In addition to my domestic travels, I have also had the opportunity to represent the United States and the Commission internationally at a time when communications policy is more global than ever.

With Chairman Carr's support, I have taken a leadership role in advancing the FCC's international engagement, including leading FCC delegations abroad and working with counterparts around the world on issues ranging from connectivity and spectrum management to network security and emerging technologies.

Most recently, I had the honor of leading the FCC delegation to the International Telecommunication Union's Global Symposium for Regulators in Ankara, Turkey. There, I discussed the Commission's spectrum priorities to boost the space economy, met with regulators

and policymakers from every region of the world, and worked to advance U.S. interests in international communications policy.

That engagement built on earlier work at the ITU's World Telecommunication Development Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan, as well as meetings and policy discussions throughout Europe and Latin America.

These experiences have highlighted that communications policy is no longer bounded by geography – and has not been for some time.

Indeed, the decisions made in international forums directly affect the nation's spectrum access, satellite operations, network security, technology standards, and the competitiveness of American companies.

And so, I have learned that maintaining U.S. leadership in communications will require continued engagement with allies and partners, active participation in international institutions, and a clear commitment to policies that promote innovation, security, and investment, particularly as we prepare for the World Radiocommunications Conference in 2027.

As I look ahead to my second year at the Commission, I believe we are living through a Golden Age of Communications, one of the most consequential periods in communications policy since the early days of the internet.

Consider the pace of innovation around us. Artificial intelligence is beginning to reshape communications networks and services. Satellite broadband is expanding connectivity in ways that seemed unimaginable only a few years ago. Wireless technologies continue to evolve and create new possibilities for consumers and businesses. And cloud-based communications platforms are transforming how organizations operate.

All that to say that the opportunities for our economy, national security, and technology leadership are enormous. And we're well-positioned as a nation to seize these opportunities.

We do so by making spectrum available for 6G and next-generation networks. This will enable capabilities like integrated sensing and communications, support autonomous applications at scale, and drive the development of new technologies and services.

We seize these opportunities by modernizing our satellite licensing policies, so we lead the world in direct-to-device connectivity, orbital data centers, in-space manufacturing, and more.

We seize them by creating a national policy framework that governs artificial intelligence to provide regulatory certainty to innovators and the public.

And, we seize them by making sure our communications networks are built using trusted and secure components.

As we push these and other initiatives forward, policymakers will have to answer important questions:

How do we ensure that regulatory frameworks remain flexible enough to promote and accommodate innovation?

How do we continue expanding connectivity to every community?

How do we strengthen network resilience in the face of evolving threats?

How do we maintain American leadership in communications technologies?

And how do we advance the public interest, ensuring that the benefits of innovation reach every consumer, business, and community across the country?

These questions are not entirely new.

What is new is the pace of change.

The technologies we discuss in conference rooms today are reaching consumers faster than ever before. The policy decisions we make today will shape communications networks, markets, and opportunities for years to come.

That reality calls for confidence, humility, and urgency.

Confidence in America's innovators, engineers, and communications providers who continue to lead the world.

Humility in recognizing that technological change often unfolds in ways we cannot fully predict.

And urgency because our adversaries around the world are just as eager to win the global race for technology supremacy.

One lesson history teaches us is that innovation flourishes when policymakers create an environment that encourages investment, promotes competition, and rewards ingenuity allowing new technologies to develop and scale.

That lesson remains as relevant today as it was for previous generations of communications leaders.

And it is one of the reasons I remain optimistic about the future. I'm also optimistic because our communications networks continue to improve, and support technologies that can expand opportunity and improve lives.

Optimistic because American companies continue to innovate.

And optimistic because the communications community has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to adapt, innovate, and meet the moment.

As I conclude, I want to once again thank Robert Branson and the entire MMTC team for bringing together such an accomplished group of leaders and for continuing to foster thoughtful dialogue on the issues shaping the future of communications.

Many of you have spent careers helping to build the governance frameworks around the communications ecosystem we rely on today. The FCC benefits enormously from your experience, your perspective, and your continued engagement.

The best chapters of this Golden Age of Communications are still being written. We have the great privilege of being among those who will write them. And so, I look forward to working with each of you to advance the shared goals of connectivity, innovation, resilience, and leadership so that all Americans can benefit from what comes next.

Thank you very much.