

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

*Re: Inquiry Concerning the Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion, and Possible Steps to Accelerate Such Deployment Pursuant to Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, as Amended by the Broadband Data Improvement Act; A National Broadband Plan for Our Future, GN Docket Nos. 09-137, 09-51, Sixth Broadband Deployment Report*

Access to broadband at home is no longer a convenience, it is a necessity. Without broadband, it is more difficult for citizens to participate in our economy, communicate with others, and obtain access to critical information that is available only online. Most parents cannot search for employment without using the Internet, and children who use the Internet during the school day often need access to it at home to complete their homework, research term papers, and apply to college. Yet our most recent data indicates that 14 to 24 million Americans lack access to broadband in their homes. For those Americans who lack access, it does not matter to them that 95% of Americans have access. What matters to them is that *they* do not have access in *their homes*. Not long ago, one mother shared her experience on broadband.gov and expressed frustration that not less than half a mile away, her neighbors have broadband. They can work from home when needed. Their children can access the Internet to improve their educational experience from home. As a nation, we should not be content when a segment of our population is left behind. Indeed, Section 706 contemplates that *all* Americans obtain the benefits of broadband.

Accordingly, I believe that it is appropriate for the Commission to conclude that broadband has not been deployed in a reasonable and timely fashion to all Americans, especially given the additional broadband availability data from the National Broadband Plan that we rely upon in this Sixth Report. In addition, I believe that where companies have had a business case to offer broadband service, they have done so. Nonetheless, there are many geographic areas in the U.S. where broadband still is not available because it is not economical for the private sector to deploy broadband and offer service. In order to remedy the lack of broadband availability, it is appropriate that the Commission fully consider the recommendations made in the National Broadband Plan to encourage broadband deployment, including for example, comprehensive reform of the universal service fund.

Universal availability, however, will be in vain unless we have universal adoption of broadband as well. Nearly 93 million Americans have not adopted broadband at home. Cost is the most cited reason for not subscribing to broadband service. The National Broadband Plan made a number of recommendations on how to make broadband affordable for all Americans, no matter where they live or what their income may be. Other commonly cited barriers to adoption include digital literacy and relevancy. I support the development of a Digital Literacy Corps – a group that will be dedicated to ensuring all Americans recognize the many benefits of broadband and are comfortable with digital technology. I am committed to doing my part in addressing these issues as expeditiously as possible so we can achieve an America where every citizen has access to and has adopted broadband.