

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *911 Governance and Accountability*, PS Docket No. 14-193; *Improving 911 Reliability*, PS Docket No. 13-75.

You may only make one 911 call in your life, but as the old saw goes, it will be the most important call you ever make. No matter the time and no matter the technology, you need to know that your call will be answered and that first responders can find you.

The challenge for the future of 911 is one that is common to other areas of communications. The ways we connect are changing at a blistering pace. Our networks are both more complex and more diverse than ever before. In the face of all this change, we need to double down and ensure that emergency communications systems are updated, secure, resilient, and reliable.

At the Commission, we have been on a multi-year course to modernize our emergency communications policies. After all, it was not that long ago that emergency calls to 911 came only from landlines. But over time, we expanded this service to mobile phones. Later, we made 911 an essential feature of interconnected VoIP service. Just a few months ago, we brought texting into the 911 fold.

We need to continue on this course. That means we must always be on guard for new vulnerabilities and gaps in the safety of our 911 systems.

We saw one such gap earlier this year when 81 911 call centers in seven states lost service for as long as six hours. As a result, thousands of people who called 911 were unable to receive the help they needed. Instead, when they reached out in crisis, they got silence at the end of the line.

So we studied. We worked with carriers, public safety officials, and our state counterparts. We learned that this multistate outage was caused by a coding error—a software glitch that stopped calls from being routed through the network to affected 911 call centers. But it is not enough to know what went wrong. We need to do something about it.

Today we propose solutions to close this gap. We propose to take our certification requirements and apply them to all entities providing essential 911 capabilities. We propose reporting requirements for outages. We also encourage states and localities to work with us as networks change and our emergency communications systems require upgrades. These ideas are commonsense—and I support them.

But while we work to close this gap, we need to be mindful of others. Today, more than 70 percent of 911 calls are made from wireless phones. That is more than 400,000 calls across the country every day. And this number is only going to grow. Because for roughly two in five households, their wireless phone is their only phone.

Despite this nationwide change in calling practices, our rules that provide first responders with information about where they are when we call 911 are stranded in calling practices of the last century. They help first responders find you when you call from a landline phone. They assist first responders with locating you when you call from a wireless phone outdoors. But if you call from a wireless phone indoors, no location accuracy standards apply.

This too is a gap. Like the one we address today and the others we have addressed before—it requires our attention. Because no matter how communications changes, when a crisis occurs, you need your call to go through and you need first responders to find you.