

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON CLYBURN**

Re: *Inquiry Concerning the Development 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, GN Docket No. 14-126.*

When afforded the opportunity to travel internationally, I beam with pride as I represent this great nation. So many look to the United States for expertise and leadership because of our advanced broadband networks, world-class research, innovation and investment and more.

We lead and are admired in large part because we are visionary – we are never satisfied with the status quo. We want to be better, we continue to push the limits and that is most notable when it comes to technology.

At CES, we witnessed some amazing innovations, like wearables, which promise to greatly improve the quality of life, particularly for our most vulnerable and fragile. But without ubiquitous broadband, and absent the means to connect, these incredible inventions are simply gadgets and flashy expensive toys for us to gaze, marvel and wonder.

As consumers adopt and demand more from their platforms and devices, the need for broadband will increase requiring robust networks to be in place in order to keep up. And what is crystal clear is that the broadband speeds of yesteryear are woefully inadequate today and beyond

So today's Broadband Progress Report adopts a forward-looking speed of 25 Mbps to ensure that America continues to lead the world and meet the needs of its consumers because as a nation we should always aspire to deliver the very best. We must ensure that all consumers have access to these life-changing technologies. Yet, what the Report affirms is that too many Americans still lack access to the broadband speeds to support the very technologies that promise to be both life altering and life-saving.

Today, however, that persistent gap affects too many households especially those who are low-income Americans, living on Tribal lands and in rural communities. This is unacceptable. And we must do more.

We must not be in such a rush to declare victory until we can honestly proclaim that we have broken down the barriers to broadband adoption, accelerated the deployment of broadband networks, and have ensured that broadband technology continues to evolve and keep pace with consumer needs.

I also believe is that the FCC has an obligation and the ability to tackle some of these barriers through the modernization of its Lifeline program. Affordability remains a barrier for too many and a recent report from the Southern Education Foundation affirmed what we already knew if we bothered to pay attention -- over 50% of our students enrolled in public schools today are living in poverty. We took a noble and noteworthy step just a few weeks ago to close the broadband gap for schools and libraries but the race is not won if it is plain to see that millions of families are still struggling to gain educational and economic parity in part because they remain disconnected at home.

Will modernizing the Lifeline solve the adoption, connectivity and educational disparity problems on its own? No, it will not. But what it will do, and what is incumbent upon the FCC to do, is to use every tool at its disposal to close as many layers of the connectivity divide as possible. Last November, I outlined [principles](#) to reform the Lifeline Program and today I am reissuing the call to all stakeholders to engage now for the returns of greater connectivity to our society are limitless. As Michelangelo famously

said, "The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it."

I want to thank the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau and the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau for their work on this item.