

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Revisions to Reporting Requirements Governing Hearing Aid-Compatible Mobile Handsets*, WT Docket No. 17-228

Today's rulemaking proposes changes to the annual report that small, rural, and regional wireless providers file detailing how the mobile handsets they offer are compatible with hearing aids. These reports take time and effort. Moreover, in their existing form they may not fully reflect the current device marketplace. I support seeking comment regarding changes to these rules.

I believe it is just as important to note what does not change with this proceeding. What does not change is that hearing loss is a big deal. More than 30 million Americans have some form of hearing difficulty—and among older Americans it is especially prevalent. There is only one other group that wrestles with hearing loss in comparably large numbers—and that's veterans.

In fact, hearing problems are the most common service-connected difficulty experienced by our veterans. Military personnel who are repeatedly exposed to gunfire and explosives face special risk. Recovering from blast-induced injuries is hard work. Getting accustomed to ringing in the ears, asking family and friends to repeat themselves, and acclimating to hearing aids takes time and effort. If anyone has the strength and fortitude to do so, it's those who have served. When they do, they deserve to be able to use mobile devices like everyone else. They deserve to have access to a full range of wireless handsets in the marketplace. They deserve to call, connect, and live life wirelessly like so many of us do.

In the end, this rulemaking is about moving to a regime with less paperwork. But I am unmoved by any suggestion this Commission should retreat from its commitment to ensuring that those with hearing loss—including veterans—have full access to modern communications. This is not only the right thing to do—it's required under the law.