

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI

Re: *Implementation of Section 6002(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993; Annual Report and Analysis of Competitive Market Conditions With Respect to Mobile Wireless, Including Commercial Mobile Services*, WT Docket No. 17-69

The 20th Mobile Wireless Competition Report that we adopt today differs from the last several reports in at least two important ways.

First, we return to giving Commissioners a chance to vote on this annual report. In 2014, 2015, and 2016, the prior leadership of the FCC abandoned long-standing practice and marginalized Commissioners by having the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau issue this report. This was wrong. So today, we return to regular order and bring this important report up for a Commission vote. Whether my colleagues are voting yes or no, I'm pleased that they can vote in the first place.

Second, we return to following the law—and by that, I mean the specific direction set out for us by Congress to include in this report an analysis of whether there is effective competition in the wireless marketplace. Unfortunately, the prior six reports have dodged this question. Indeed, the last time this report included a finding of whether the wireless market was competitive was our 13th Report, way back in 2009. The wireless buzz at the time was over the Apple iPhone 3GS, and the App Store was barely a year old. It's been eight long years since the FCC has done what Congress directed us to do. Today, we are finally getting back on track.

The 20th Report reviews many factors indicating that the wireless marketplace is, indeed, effectively competitive. I won't repeat them here; that's why we have the report. But looking at the bigger picture, most reasonable people see a fiercely competitive marketplace. For example, since the FCC's last report in 2016, all four national carriers have rolled out new or improved unlimited plans. This is strong, incontrovertible evidence.

To be sure, some strenuously resist this conclusion, and have for many years. At its core, it's hard to say that resistance is inspired by a careful review of the facts. Instead, it's all about ideology. To those who want to impose more regulation upon the wireless marketplace, the reality of effective competition is an inconvenient truth that must be discounted or ignored. But today, the Commission begins with the facts, not the conclusion. Those facts are what they are; the FCC will once again do what Congress has told us to do.

Thank you to the staff that worked on this item: Matt Collins, Judith Dempsey, Monica DeLong, Ben Freeman, Garnet Hanly, Leon Jackler, Pramesh Jobanputra, Kate Matraves, Betsy McIntyre, Paroma Sanyal, Dana Shaffer, Don Stockdale, Cecilia Sulhoff, Joel Taubenblatt, Joe Wyer, and Mary Claire York from the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau; Jim Schlichting from the International Bureau; Jerry Ellig, Evan Kwerel, Paul LaFontaine, and Wayne Leighton from the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Analysis; and David Horowitz, Keith McCrickard, Linda Oliver, Joel Rabinovitz, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel. As Don noted, I'd also like to give a shout out to the teams in the Wireline Competition Bureau, Media Bureau, and Enforcement Bureau which helped review this item.