

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL O'RIELLY**

Re: Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism, CC Docket No. 02-6

The areas devastated by the recent hurricanes continue to face significant infrastructure and communications service challenges, notwithstanding the substantial rebuilding and restoration efforts of both the public and private sectors. Therefore, I also support this additional step to provide schools and libraries affected by the hurricanes with additional flexibility to make service substitutions, apply for funding, and serve displaced students. And I thank the Chairman for his ongoing commitment and actions to help impacted communities.

I write only to suggest that the Commission work with Congress to determine whether any additional support provided through this and other universal service programs could be reimbursed through funding appropriated for hurricane relief. Because of our budget limitations, providing additional funding from universal service generally comes at the expense of other recipients. Targeted funding from Congress would ensure that qualifying providers and beneficiaries receive the relief needed to rebuild and restore service without impeding the important work of other universal service program participants to connect unserved communities.

I vote to approve.