

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN AJIT PAI**

Re: *Rules and Policies Regarding Calling Number Identification Service – Caller ID; Waiver of Federal Communications Commission Regulations at 47 C.F.R. § 64.1601(b) on Behalf of Jewish Community Centers*, CC Docket No. 91-281

This past January, Jewish Community Centers (JCCs) across the United States received anonymous bomb threats.¹ Months of investigation yielded few results. Law enforcement officers were unable to identify the callers partly because of one of our rules. That rule requires carriers to honor a customer's request that his or her telephone number not be transmitted or otherwise revealed to the party called—which prevents third parties, including law enforcement, from figuring out who's calling.

This past March, the Commission granted a temporary waiver of the rule. This waiver permitted carriers to share the caller ID information from threatening calls to JCCs, to any carriers that serve JCCs, and to law enforcement authorities. Today, we go a step further and propose to amend our rules to ensure that all threatened parties and law enforcement have access to caller ID in order to help identify and bring intimidating callers to justice.

To be sure, there are valid justifications for this rule. For example, blocking caller ID information for calls made from domestic violence shelters can protect people at risk of injury or even death. But the protections afforded by this rule can also be abused, as events earlier this year suggested. In these circumstances, the core value of public safety must outweigh any privacy interest a caller may have in his or her phone number.

Sadly, instances of threatening calls are on the rise. According to one study, bomb threats made to schools increased by 1,461% between 2011 and 2016.² Over half of those threats were made by phone. This is unacceptable. Our schools and communities should not be held hostage to life-threatening taunts from anonymous callers. And our nation's finest should not be hampered in investigating such calls.

Under the proposals set forth in today's *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*, a carrier would not be required to keep private caller ID information from a threatening call, such as a bomb threat, and law enforcement therefore would not be hamstrung in pursuing its investigation. The *Notice* also seeks comment on what safeguards should be in place to ensure that this exemption itself isn't abused. For example, we ask how to define and authenticate threatening calls, and whether disclosure of such information should be limited to law enforcement authorities or certain entities. Our goal, which is reflected in the rule itself, is to ensure respect for the legitimate privacy interests of non-threatening callers.

I'd like to thank Micah Caldwell, Nellie Foosaner, Karen Schroeder, Kurt Schroeder, Richard Smith, Nancy Stevenson, Mark Stone, and Patrick Webre from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Kirk Burgee, Madeleine Findley, Daniel Kahn, Melissa Droller Kinkel, Nirali Patel, and Ann Stevens from the Wireline Competition Bureau; and Doug Klein, Billy Layton, Rick Mallen, Linda Oliver, and Bill Richardson from the Office of General Counsel, for their dedication and commitment to protect all Americans from threatening callers.

¹ See Mitch Smith, *Anonymous Bomb Threats Rattle Jewish Centers Across Eastern U.S.*, The New York Times, (Jan. 9, 2017), <http://nyti.ms/2sVoXU9>.

² See Dr. Amy Klinger and Amanda Klinger, Esq., *Bomb Incidents in Schools: An analysis of 2015-2016 School Year* (May 30, 2017).