

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *Rural Call Completion*, WC Docket No. 13-39.

As then Acting Chairwoman, back in 2013, I was proud to adopt the first Report and Order on rural call completion. Today, through the adoption of this item, we build upon that effort which recognized that too many in rural America were having subpar call completion experiences. At the time, I said that “[a]t the core of the FCC’s mission is an obligation to ensure all Americans have access to reliable communications services.” This is as true in 2017, as it was in 2013 — perhaps even more so. Thus, I am pleased to see the Commission carrying forward the work we started over five years ago, because all our talk of building out networks to rural and high-cost areas would be for naught if that network and those services were unreliable.

Today’s item takes another step forward in ensuring reliable telephone service to rural areas. While our 2013 Order addressed the obvious symptoms of failed call completion —delayed calls, false ring tones, or no ring tones at all — and deemed them harmful, we did not know how big the problem was. Thanks to our data collection requirements, we now have a clearer picture. Sunlight, as the saying goes, has been an excellent disinfectant, and I firmly believe that the recordkeeping, retention, and reporting requirements have ensured that at least some covered providers got their houses in order. But while these efforts are noteworthy, our job is not yet done.

That is why I am pleased we are seeking comment on further substantive protections for rural consumers. While many have cleaned up their act, the Wireline Bureau’s report shows that there are several providers whose call completion rates to rural area are still unacceptable. I hope that the rules we ultimately adopt will help stamp out this shortfall once and for all.

I am also pleased that we are looking at cleaning up our data collection, by inviting a broader discussion on revisions, additions, and substitutions to our current rules. Simply removing our reporting requirements would be an invitation to less-than-model carriers to skirt the FCC’s call completion rules, so I look forward to reviewing the record and charting a path forward on improving our recordkeeping, retention and reporting requirements.

Thanks to the Wireline Competition Bureau for your work to ensure that rural America receives robust telephone service.