STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR

Re: *Toll Free Assignment Modernization, WC Docket No. 17-192; Toll Free Service Access Codes*,
        CC Docket No. 95-155.

A video recently circulated of Missouri Congressman Billy Long displaying a unique set of skills during a House Energy and Commerce Committee hearing. For those of you who don't know, Congressman Long is an auctioneer by training and he owned an auctions company before he became a member of Congress. So when the hearing was disrupted by a protester, Congressman Long used his auction bid calling skills to draw attention away from the protest and get the hearing back on track.

Now what, you might ask, does this have to do with the FCC and the toll free numbers item in particular? Well, over the past few decades, the FCC has become something of an auctioneer itself. Thanks to our spectrum auctions, the U.S. has freed up more spectrum for commercial use than any other country in the world. And the FCC has experienced so much success with auctions that we've begun using them in the universal service program to modernize the way we distribute support.

So I'm glad to see we're now carrying this experience over into toll free numbers. In the Communications Act, Congress directed the FCC to make toll free numbers available on an "equitable basis." Historically, we interpreted this to mean handing out valuable toll-free numbers on a first-come, first-served basis. But this approach has proven to be inefficient and susceptible to arbitrage and gaming. As such, it makes sense to test whether a market-based mechanism can better allocate toll free numbers. I am particularly glad that we take steps to establish a secondary market for toll free numbers, which will help ensure that these numbers are put to their highest and best use.

Thank you to the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for your work on this item. I look forward to learning the results of the upcoming auction of 833 toll free numbers and the takeaways for the future assignment of toll free numbers.