

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Location-Based Routing For 911 Calls*, PS Docket No. 18-64.

Last month marked the 50th anniversary of the first 911 call. At 2:00 p.m. on February 16, 1968, the speaker of the Alabama House of Representatives, Rankin Fite, dialed 911. He was connected to the Haleyville, Alabama, police station where Congressman Tom Bevill answered the call. Much has changed since that ceremonial first call. Today, for instance, over 240 million calls are placed to 911 each year in the U.S. And an estimated 80% of those calls come from a wireless phone. It is our job at the FCC to help ensure that every one of those calls reaches a public safety official who can help. In times of crisis, no one should wonder whether our 911 system is going to fail.

But as today's Notice of Inquiry highlights, the system is not perfect. Right now, when a caller dials 911 from a cellphone, the system will often route the call to a public safety answering point, or PSAP, based on the location of the cell tower that handles the call. In some cases, that tower can be miles away from the caller. And this can result in misrouted 911 calls, particularly where the caller is located near the geographic boundary between two different PSAPs. Unfortunately, these misrouted calls must then be transferred to the correct PSAP, which adds precious seconds of delay that, in an emergency, are seconds too many.

This concern is not merely hypothetical. In 2015, for example, a D.C. resident woke up to a crashing sound and footsteps coming up the stairs. She hid in a closet and called 911, but her call was mistakenly routed to a 911 dispatch center in Prince George's County, Maryland. While she remained huddled in a closet, the dispatch center eventually re-routed the call to 911 operators in D.C. Thankfully she was unharmed, but, by the time the police arrived, the thieves had escaped.

There are many stories like these and others that have had much worse outcomes. That's why I support today's inquiry, which moves forward with ideas for reforming our wireless 911 call routing rules. Location technologies have now advanced to the point where carriers may be able to route wireless 911 calls directly to the correct PSAP in many more cases, though technical challenges remain. So I am glad we are seeking comment on the recommendations in the CSRIC report and thinking creatively about ways to transition away from tower-based routing. I am also pleased that the item asks about implementation of location-based routing as we transition from legacy 911 systems to Next-Generation 911. We need to be mindful that any steps we take in this proceeding are consistent with that transition, and I look forward to reviewing the record that develops on this point.

I thank the staff of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau for their diligent work on this item. I am glad that the Commission is taking up this important public safety matter. It has my support.