

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MIGNON L. CLYBURN**

Re: *DataConnex, LLC*, File No.: EB-IHD-15-00020296

Today we propose a nearly \$19 million forfeiture against a company that thumbed its nose at our agency's rules. Through a web of underhanded deals, kickbacks, and falsified documents, DataConnex apparently took advantage of the Rural Healthcare program, the ratepayer, and the public trust.

I always say that waste, fraud, and abuse must not be tolerated in any of our Universal Service programs, which is why this item has my full support. I am also pleased that we include language that would allow us to revoke DataConnex's Commission authorizations if the findings in this Notice of Apparent Liability are upheld. No company is above the law, and if this company indeed has this level of disregard for our rules, it should not be allowed to receive one more dollar from the Universal Service Fund. I would also encourage our staff to work with relevant state and federal authorities to support bringing about criminal charges. The salacious conduct in this NAL is a solid factual base that could underpin further prosecution.

I thank the hardworking staff of the Enforcement Bureau, and in particular the USF Strike Force, whose diligent investigative work is on display here.