

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Modernizing Suspension and Debarment Rules*, GN Docket No. 19-309, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (November 22, 2019)

Year-in and year-out, the Federal Communications Commission oversees the distribution of billions of dollars through the universal service fund, telecommunications relay service system, and national deaf-blind equipment distribution program. To prevent waste, fraud, and abuse the agency prevents those convicted or found civilly liable for misconduct relating to these programs from participation. The rules that do so are known as suspension and debarment.

Today we revisit those policies. Our goal is to improve them and align them with similar guidelines used by the Office of Management and Budget. This is a worthy effort because done right we will have new tools to prevent problems with these programs going forward. Moreover, our suspension and debarment rules have been underutilized in recent years and it is smart to ask if there are improvements that can be made.

I am pleased that at my request this rulemaking now also asks questions about preventing those who have been suspended or debarred from sitting on the FCC's advisory committees.

This is not an abstract thing. Because a while back the leadership of the FCC appointed members to the agency's Broadband Deployment Advisory Committee. Sitting at the top of this organization was someone named Elizabeth Pierce. Her name might sound familiar. While she was put at the helm of the BDAC and entrusted with an important role at this agency she was also engaged in serious fraud. She developed no less than eight fraudulent contracts for telecommunications services worth over a billion dollars. She no longer serves in any advisory role at the FCC. She is serving time in jail. It is a black mark on this agency that she was put in charge of such an important committee and I hope with this rulemaking we ensure that kind of disaster never happens again.