

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Implementation of the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018*, WC Docket No. 18-336.

Suicide is a national tragedy. More than 47,000 Americans died by suicide in 2017. That's more than died from liver disease or in car accidents. More than 20 veterans commit suicide every day, as they deal with adjusting from the horror of war and finding a path in civilian life.

Suicide and attendant mental health challenges have received far too little attention for far too long. That is now changing. And importantly, the conversation about mental health is changing. After all, feelings of isolation and crisis—those are not experiences that happen to “them” or “others.” What we’re talking about is what our parents feel, our kids feel, what we feel. Anything we can do to break down barriers, to make it easier for conversations about mental health and counseling to feel within reach, is something we should do.

And that is why I want to commend Chairman Pai for leading the FCC’s work to play our part in this effort. The FCC can bring attention to this issue and help to those in need. There is already a network of 163 crisis centers that are part of a National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. They answer over 2.2 million calls per year and more than 100,000 online chats. They are a life-saving resource. But not enough Americans know about this help, or they might not know the number, which is 1-800-273-8255. Shortening that number to 988, as we propose today, could make a difference as a broad range of stakeholders already have indicated with their support.

I’m proud to support this NPRM, and I want to thank the staff of the Wireline Competition Bureau for their work on this very important item.