

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

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

Every day in this country, thousands and thousands of people call the national suicide and mental health hotline with a plea for help. They are in crisis. We are in crisis, too. That's because all the available data demonstrate that suicide is on the rise. What strikes me most in these numbers is that suicide is increasing among young people. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is now among the top causes of death for teenagers and young adults. Suicide rates for teenage girls are at a 40-year high. In fact, the rate of suicide for girls between ages 10 and 14 has tripled since the start of the millennium. For Black teens, we've seen similar increases. For LGBTQ youth the numbers are downright chilling. More than 1.8 million are expected to contemplate suicide this year alone.

These young people deserve a future. They deserve support. And that support should be simple to access. Today we help make that possible. Following the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act, the Federal Communications Commission formally designates an easy-to-remember three-digit number for a new national suicide hotline. We set a deadline for transition to this number. We provide technical details about how these calls will be routed and what changes will be required to our telephone networks to make this happen.

I wholeheartedly approve this effort. But in light of the skyrocketing rates of suicide among our nation's young people, I think this agency should have been more ambitious. Right now, the FCC lacks a plan to incorporate the ability to text into the number we establish today. But as we confront the rise in suicide by teenagers across the country, we should acknowledge that texting is their primary form of communication. Voice service has its benefits, but it is not native for most young people. So I regret today's decision is anchored in older technologies and takes a pass on developing texting capabilities with this three-digit hotline. We should have done so here. I sincerely hope we can do so in the future.