

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS
APPROVING IN PART AND DISSENTING IN PART**

Re: *Communications Marketplace Report et al.*, GN Docket No. 20-60

Much of this Report is uncontroversial and useful. I thank the Commission staff who assembled this wide-ranging look at the communications marketplace. The wealth of factual information presented here is a testament to both their hard work and the enormous scope of issues facing the Commission today.

I cannot, however, fully approve this Report. Many of the decisions the Report touts as promoting competition and closing the digital divide have done no such thing. Here's one important example: The Report's discussion of the *2019 Lifeline Reform Order* leaves that decision's harmful impacts—increasing red tape, reducing provider participation, and making it less likely that low-income Americans will receive robust broadband internet access through the program—out of the discussion entirely. Another missed opportunity is in the Report's general description of regulatory barriers to entry into broadcasting without any specific discussion of the historically persistent barriers to entry, including access to capital, for people of color and women.

Moreover, the Report's agenda for the next two years fails to set the right vision, particularly with respect to the fixed communications marketplace. There is not one word in that section about promoting affordability or making sure that low-income communities share in the benefits of broadband. At the end of this difficult year, we should not need more evidence that internet inequality stands between tens of millions of Americans and equitable access to opportunity. I therefore dissent in part.