

**STATEMENT OF  
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion*, GN Docket 19-285, 2020 Broadband Deployment Report.

The momentum behind America's 5G leadership is now unmistakable. As this report shows, we have turned the page on the failed broadband policies of the previous administration, and the private sector has responded. America's broadband builders are now trenching conduit, pulling fiber, and installing new high-speed cell sites at an unprecedented clip. While we are far from the finish line, the significant progress we're making in closing the digital divide is welcome news.

Regulations matter. And for years, the FCC pursued partisan policies that only made it harder for the private sector to bring more broadband to more Americans. From 2014 to 2017, for instance, the deployment of high-speed mobile wireless services in rural communities stagnated.<sup>1</sup> Our pro-deployment policies have enabled the private sector to turn that around, and new builds are once again on the rise.

Internet speeds are also increasing. Since the end of 2016, the percentage of Americans with access to 250/25 Mbps has nearly doubled, from 43.6% to 85.6% at the end of 2018.<sup>2</sup> Data from third-party monitors show that Internet speeds are up roughly 85% since year-end 2016. Internet providers have also built out more miles of high-speed fiber in 2019 than ever before—smashing prior records. The digital divide has narrowed substantially—closing by about 30% between year-end 2016 and 2018. Competition has also increased, with the percentage of Americans having more than two options for 25/3 Mbps high-speed services increasing 52% over that same time period.

Results like these should put the partisan effort to seize greater government control of the Internet in the rear view window. Indeed, it is more clear than ever before that the prior FCC's years-long effort to apply heavy-handed utility-style regulation to the Internet elevated politics over policy. It slowed down the important work needed to close the digital divide and held back competition. As the current pandemic highlights, we should all come together around policies that will encourage the accelerated buildout of high-speed networks in every community in this country.

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 2b.

<sup>2</sup> Figure 4.