

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Schools and Libraries Universal Support Mechanism*, CC Docket No. 02-6, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (September 30, 2021).

The Pine Ridge Indian Reservation stretches across 2.7 million acres along the border of South Dakota and Nebraska—roughly the same size as the entire state of Connecticut. When I visited two years ago, it was clear that the area’s vast distances and higher than average poverty rates created obstacles for broadband builds and adoption. And these challenges are not unique to Pine Ridge. Indeed, our latest reporting indicates that 21% of people on Tribal land lack access to broadband, lagging behind the progress that has been made in other communities. The opportunities that come with an affordable connection are also clear. While visiting the library at the Mescalero Apache School in New Mexico last year, I met a student named Lana that had used her school’s broadband connection to write code for a miniature robot.

Today’s decision proposes to build on that type of success and extend the opportunities for connectivity at Tribal libraries. So I want to thank Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel for bringing this item forward. It has my support.