

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER GEOFFREY STARKS**

Re: *Inquiry Concerning Deployment of Advanced Telecommunications Capability to All Americans in a Reasonable and Timely Fashion*, GN Docket No. 20-269.

Over the last two years, I have decried the unwarranted victory laps these reports seem to spawn. Now—as tens of millions of Americans find themselves unable to access online school, work, and healthcare during the pandemic—patting ourselves on the back is particularly unseemly. My views on the flaws in the data and analysis underlying this Report are well documented, and I will not repeat them here. But I am compelled to note that this Report should not have been released at all. After the election in November, congressional leaders wrote to Chairman Pai to demand that the Commission stop work on all partisan and controversial items during the presidential transition. This item is both.

Nonetheless, Chairman Pai declined to withdraw the Report as Commissioner Rosenworcel and I requested. His rationale—that the Report has no legal significance—is plainly inconsistent with the Telecommunications Act, which directs the Commission to take “immediate action” if it determines that advanced telecommunications capability is not being deployed to all Americans on a reasonable and timely basis. That determination should have been left to the next administration, which could have addressed the question before the statutory deadline. For this reason and the substantive reasons I outlined at the Notice of Inquiry stage, I dissent.