

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER NATHAN SIMINGTON**

Re: *Emergency Broadband Benefit Program*, WC Docket No. 20-445.

The pandemic has cost hundreds of thousands of American lives and millions of American jobs. It has isolated people from one another and dramatically disrupted the flow of everyday life. And, for too many American families who have been impacted financially by the pandemic, it has forced difficult choices regarding which bills to pay.

For the most vulnerable Americans who rely more than ever on broadband to connect to family, to school, to doctors, and to services, the need to stay connected during this pandemic is non-negotiable. And if we are able to help those Americans stay connected, we should. Fortunately, Congress directed us to do just that.

With today's vote, the Commission acts swiftly to implement a program that will help those most affected by the pandemic to stay connected to the those who mean the most to them. Yet while the Commission has acted quickly, today's order creates thoughtful, fair, and sensible policies. I could not be prouder of, or more humbled by, the diligent work of the employees across the agency, particularly those in the Wireline Competition Bureau. I am further thankful to my dedicated staff for their contributions leading up to this vote. Lastly, I am thankful to my fellow Commissioners and their staffs for their critical, and down-to-the-wire, work in negotiating and drafting the order. Positive aspects that I'd like to particularly like to highlight include the common start date, which helps all broadband providers to ramp up and enter the program on level footing; flexible eligibility verification for those providers who need it; and sensible guardrails to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

While the focus today must be on serving those hurt by the pandemic, it bears mentioning that this item was shepherded for a prompt vote by Acting Chairwoman Rosenworcel. I deeply appreciate her leadership and the contributions of her staff in creating a comprehensive and balanced order.

I am proud to vote to approve this item.