

**STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Affordable Connectivity Program*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Second Report and Order (August 5, 2022).

Over the last two years, Congress has made an historic commitment to extending high-speed Internet service to every American. Part of that effort has involved appropriating new funding that enables the FCC to tackle the affordability portion of the digital divide. At the FCC, we have worked quickly and collaboratively to achieve that goal. Together, we have stood up from scratch the \$3.2 billion Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, the \$7.1 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund, and the \$14.2 billion Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Today, we are coming together to further implement Congress's vision for the ACP by establishing a new grant program that will bolster efforts to ensure that the families Congress intended to benefit from these discounts are empowered to participate.

I want to express my thanks and appreciation to Chairwoman Rosenworcel and my colleagues for agreeing to incorporate suggestions I offered into the item before us today. First, I have long expressed the view that we must remain focused on those families that still remain unconnected today. Those that have not yet adopted broadband must be our top priority. That is why I am pleased that today's decision now determines that we will prioritize applications that target households that are on no Internet plan at all—the point of this is to increase adoption, not just shuffle money around. Second, I am very pleased that we are now including a \$10 million set-aside for bolstering ACP participation within Tribal communities. After all, I have seen firsthand the challenges that remain when it comes to ending the digital divide on Tribal lands—including on a visit last year to the Coeur D'Alene reservation where I met with Tribal leaders to discuss expanding participation in the ACP Program. So I am glad that we are now dedicating funding to make long-overdue progress on this issue. Third, we now ensure an equitable distribution of funding by establishing a set, minimum amount of funding that will be allocated evenly to every state. Fourth, I'm also pleased that the Order now includes a number of measures to help maximize the impact of the program, such as putting a cap on administrative expenses and committing to using objective measures. Finally, I'm glad we are incorporating some additional measures that are designed to promote transparency and accountability, including prohibiting undisclosed subrecipients. These edits will help maximize the odds that we achieve Congress's goals with the ACP initiative, but it will be important for the agency to remain vigilant as it selects and oversees grantees, including through the NOFO process.

Again, I would like to thank Chairwoman Rosenworcel for bringing this item forward and for working alongside me and my colleagues to incorporate feedback into the Order we adopt today. I'd also like to thank staff from the Wireline Competition Bureau for their hard work on this item. It has my support.