

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Modernizing the E-Rate Program for Schools and Libraries*, WC Docket No. 13-184, Declaratory Ruling (Sept. 30, 2025).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress took decisive action to keep students connected by authorizing the FCC to use the newly created Emergency Connectivity Fund to support eligible equipment and services at locations other than the school. At the time, I supported the agency's rules implementing that program, including funding for Wi-Fi connectivity on school buses.

But when the emergency ended and the ECF program expired, the FCC went a step further. It sought to permanently expand the E-Rate program—despite clear statutory limits—by including funding for Wi-Fi on school buses. I raised objections then and called for a full accounting of ECF spending, to help us understand what worked and what didn't. Unfortunately, those calls went unanswered.

Today's decision corrects course. It restores the FCC's commitment to following the law as written and respecting the intent of Congress. Section 254 of the Communications Act is clear: E-Rate funding is meant to enhance access to telecommunications services in classrooms and libraries. A school bus is neither. We cannot simply reinterpret "classrooms" to mean any place where learning might occur. That's not how statutory interpretation works, and it's not how responsible policymaking should work either.

Moreover, giving kids unrestricted access to the internet while riding the school bus is bad policy. Children are among the most impressionable members of our society. Parents have a right to decide when—and how—their kids access the internet. Wi-Fi on school buses removes both the supervision that helps keep kids safe and the parental control that protects them from harmful or inappropriate content.

Today's decision puts an end to the unlawful use of E-Rate funds for Wi-Fi on school buses. It ensures we are acting within the bounds of the law and serving as good stewards of federal dollars—just as Congress intended.

For their great work on this item, I'd like to thank Allison Baker, Sarah Citrin, Bradley Craigmyle, Kate Dumouchel, Gabby Gross, Andrea Kelly, David Konczal, Richard Mallen, Molly O'Connor, Nick Page, Christopher Santini, Johnnay Schrieber, Derek Yeo, and Chin Yoo.