

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Promoting Technological Solutions to Combat Contraband Wireless Device Use in Correctional Facilities*, GN Docket No. 13-111, Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Sept. 30, 2025).

Nine years ago, I had the chance to meet a hero and a miracle—Captain Robert Johnson. Captain Johnson served our country for 23 years in the Air Force. He then continued his public service by working for 15 years at the South Carolina Department of Corrections. In particular, he was in charge of finding and confiscating contraband cellphones at Lee Correctional facility in Bishopville, South Carolina.

Captain Johnson was really good at his job. In fact, the inmates thought he was too good at it. Six years before I met Captain Johnson, when he was in his home one morning getting dressed for work, a gunman kicked down his front door and shot him six times at point blank range in the chest. It was a hit called in by an inmate using a contraband cellphone. Thankfully, Captain Johnson survived.

But in many ways, his story is not unique. Contraband cellphones have been pouring into state and local prisons by the tens of thousands every year. They are used to run drug operations, orchestrate kidnappings, and further criminal enterprises in communities all across the country.

Over the years, the FCC has taken several steps to help address the scourge of contraband cellphones. We have authorized the use of contraband interdiction systems, taken numerous actions to streamline barriers to deploy those systems, and adopted a framework for carriers to disable contraband cellphones upon the request of a prison. Providing public safety officials with these tools has helped, but not nearly enough.

That's the message I heard earlier this month when I joined Senator Tom Cotton and State AG Tim Griffin in Arkansas for a tour of the Varner Supermax facility. Federal prisons have long been authorized to jam contraband cellphones. But state and local prisons have not been allowed to use it. The guards and law enforcement officials we met with at Varner asked us to change this. They told us that contraband cellphones are at the root of so many evils that take place both inside and outside of prisons. If we can solve this problem, if we will allow them to try jamming solutions, it will go a long way towards improving public safety.

Senator Cotton and AG Griffin have been helping to lead the charge on this. Senator Cotton introduced the *Cellphone Jamming Reform Act of 2025* in March and has been introducing similar legislation since 2019. AG Griffin also led a letter with 22 other State AGs calling on the FCC to seek comment on jamming and modernize FCC regulations to support law enforcement. Representative Kustoff has also been a congressional leader on this initiative. Yesterday, he led a letter along with 10 other members of Congress supporting today's action. Their calls have been echoed by many others.

We respond to their calls today. With our vote, we propose to remove what many have viewed as a federal prohibition on jamming in state and local prisons. As we do so, we keep several points in mind. First, this will be entirely voluntary. No state or local prisons will be required to jam. Second, our notice proposes to authorize targeted jamming. Jamming technology can be precise enough that it does not interrupt the regular communications of law enforcement or community members in the vicinity. Third, this will not be a silver bullet. Jamming will not make sense for every facility. But there are many places where it will be the right solution.

After the Arkansas event earlier this month, on our way to the airport, I called Captain Johnson on the phone. He had watched the livestream of the press conference. He said he was just a couple

months removed from another surgery. But he said that he could not be happier to see that the FCC was moving forward with a jamming proposal. He was so grateful for the agency's work. I told Captain Johnson how thankful we were for his years' long leadership on this issue. I'm glad we're getting this one across the finish line for him.

For their work on this item, I'd like to thank Brian Butler, Jamie Coleman, Melissa Conway, Lloyd Coward, Michael Ha, Ira Keltz, Roger Noel, and Nick Oros.