

**STATEMENT OF  
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization; Applications for Review of Order of the Wireline Competition Bureau by Assist Wireless, LLC, et al.; Lifeline Universal Service Support Mechanism*, WC Docket No. 11-42, Order on Review (Dec. 3, 2025).

Today's decision protects the Lifeline program from abuse by refusing to extend a COVID-era waiver that would allow Lifeline providers to obtain additional federal subsidies for services that their subscribers were not using.

The American people fund the Lifeline program, and the Commission has a duty to safeguard those funds. One way we protect the Lifeline program from waste, fraud, and abuse is through the non-usage rule, which requires providers to de-enroll subscribers who are not using their Lifeline service. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, the Commission temporarily waived the Lifeline non-usage rule to make sure that no one was involuntarily de-enrolled.

That temporary waiver ended on April 30, 2021. Soon after, a handful of carriers participating in Lifeline petitioned the Commission, arguing the waiver actually expired on May 1, 2021. This may seem like a small distinction—it's just one day—until you consider that extending the waiver by one day would entitle these carriers to an additional month of reimbursements. Put differently, these providers are seeking millions of dollars in additional support, at the American public's expense, for services that no one was using.

This is a clear attempt to exploit the flexibility the Commission provided during the pendency of the COVID-19 pandemic after the need for leniency had passed. With today's action, we stop this attempt to game the system and receive extra reimbursement. I thank the FCC staff for their work on this item.