

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRMAN BRENDAN CARR**

Re: *Promoting Fair and Open Competitive Bidding in the E-Rate Program Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism*, WC Docket No. 21-455, CC Docket No. 02-6, Report and Order and Order on Reconsideration, (Apr. 30, 2026).

The FCC's E-Rate program has played an important role in helping to close the digital divide by ensuring that schools and libraries have access to affordable Internet services. To ensure the program's continued success, we must be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and safeguard E-Rate from waste, fraud, and abuse.

That is why today's item is another common sense step forward. Going back to 2017, the FCC's Office of Inspector General urged the Commission to create an online competitive bid repository that requires providers to provide their bids in an open, transparent manner. The idea is straightforward. A bidding portal that facilitates open and transparent engagement will deter bad actors from engaging in misconduct during the bidding process. The Inspector General has continued to reiterate its recommendation in subsequent reports. In 2020, the Government Accountability Office also released a report finding that E-Rate participants could misrepresent compliance with the competitive bidding rules, since there was no direct access to the underlying bidding information. GAO specifically referenced the Inspector General's recommendation for a bidding repository, agreeing that a portal could strengthen program controls.

Today, we finally act on those warnings and the Inspector General's recommendation. We do so bringing much needed transparency to the E-Rate bidding process. Instead of continuing to rely on self-certifications, we can rely on verifiable data. And instead of allowing the bidding process to largely happen in the dark, we are bringing light to the back and forth engagement that happens between providers, participants, and other engaged stakeholders. This, in turn, will allow the FCC and USAC to ensure that USF funds are supporting services being provided at the lowest possible rates.

But this step shouldn't be and will not be our last. There's much more work to be done to protect the integrity of the E-Rate program and to ensure that it is carried out as envisioned by Congress.

For their great work on this item, I'd like to thank Joseph Calascione, Allison Baker, Bryan Boyle, Johnnay Schrieber, Kate Dumouchel, Gabriela L. Gross, Veronica Garcia-Ulloa, Jennifer Mensah, Dan Daly, and D'wana Terry.