

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Promoting Telehealth in Rural America*, WC Docket No. 17-310, Third Report and Order (December 13, 2023).

The Federal Communications Commission has been supporting telemedicine way before it was trendy. For more than 25 years, the agency's rural health care program has been a force for good, helping sustain telehealth services in some of the hardest-to-reach corners of this country. But post-pandemic telemedicine has moved into the medical mainstream. Virtual appointments, remote monitoring, and support for advanced medical imaging are now familiar to patients in rural America, urban America, and everything in between. It has been incredible to see such extraordinary change in healthcare and technology.

What does not change, however, is that this agency needs to update its rural health care program to ensure that it serves the places that need support with modern telehealth technology. That is why today we are taking steps to simplify our rules, speed access to the program for new providers, and free up millions of dollars of unused program funding.

These changes are vital. After all, there are forces out there—insurance limitations, licensing restrictions, resistance to Medicaid expansion, and court cases that can make it harder for patients to access healthcare. We will do all we can at this agency to ensure that despite these challenges, this program—like it has for more than a quarter of a century—continues to help provide first-class care in rural communities across the country.

Thank you to the staff who worked on this order, including Allison Baker, Phil Bonomo, Bryan Boyle, Cheryl Callahan, Callie Coker, Adam Copeland, Ross Fisher, Jodie Griffin, Trent Harkrader, Clint Highfill, Sonam James, Avis Mitchell, Kiara Ortiz, and Helen Zhang of the Wireline Competition Bureau; Marcus Maher, Rick Mallen, Derek Yeo, and Chin Yoo of the Office of General Counsel; and Eugene Kiselev, Eric Ralph, and Shane Taylor of the Office of Economics and Analytics.