

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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CONSUMER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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MEETING

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FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

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The Advisory Committee met via Video Teleconference, at 10:30 a.m. EDT, Steve Pociask, Chairman, presiding.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

AJIT PAI, Chairman
BRENDAN CARR, Commissioner

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

STEVE POCIASK, Committee Chairman
ZAINAB ALKEBSI, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer
Advocacy Network
WILLIAM BENDETSON, Massachusetts Department of
Telecommunications & Cable
DEBRA R. BERLYN, National Consumers League
SAM BRINTON, The Trevor Project
BARBARA BURTON, National Association of State
Utility Consumer Advocates
JOSLYN DAY, Massachusetts Department of
Telecommunications & Cable
MARK DEFALCO, Appalachian Regional Commission
B. LYNN FOLLANSBEE, USTelecom
CORALETTE HANNON, AARP
JONATHON HAUENSCHILD, American Legislative
Exchange Council
KYLE J. HILDEBRAND, serving individually as a
subject-matter expert, Special Government
Employee
BRIAN HURLEY, America's Communications
Association - ACA Connects
THADDEUS JOHNSON, National Association of State
Utility Consumer Advocates
DAWIT KAHSAI, AARP
JOHNNY KAMPIS, serving individually as a subject-
matter expert, Special Government Employee
ERIC KOCH, serving individually as a subject-
matter expert, Special Government Employee
IRENE LEECH, Consumer Federation of America
SARAH LEGGIN, CTIA
VONDA LONG-DILLARD, AT&T
KATIE MCAULIFFE, Americans for Tax Reform
STEVEN MORRIS, NCTA - The Internet and Television
Association
RACHEL NEMETH, Consumer Technology Association
MICHAEL SANTORELLI, serving individually as a
subject-matter expert, Special Government
Employee
BARRY UMANSKY, Digital Policy Institute
LARRY WALKE, National Association of Broadcasters
OLIVIA WEIN, National Consumer Law Center
BOHDAN ZACHARY, Milwaukee PBS

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P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

10:32 a.m.

CHAIR POCIASK: So today is the Fall 2020 Federal Communications Commission's Consumer Advisory Committee Meeting, the CAC. This will be our last meeting for the 10th Charter, and let me quickly go through some guidelines before we begin the session and the roll call.

So again, as I've stated a couple of times now, if I could have all the members and presenters mute your audio and turn off your video unless you're actively speaking.

When we take questions, please use the hand-raising function of Zoom to request to be recognized. Once you're recognized by me, then please turn your video and unmute your audio to speak. Then please pause a couple seconds before you speak or before you start a slide presentation for those presenters, just to ensure that everyone has access before you proceed.

And then when you begin, please, please identify yourself by name and your organization

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before speaking. Then turn off your video and mute your audio when you're done. Always remember to pause before moving along so everyone is on board. We have interpreters and we don't want the screens to be jumping around, so we want everything to be stable for that purpose.

So with that, I want to thank all the members and alternates and staff and presenters and the public for joining in the event today. I hope everyone is healthy and keeping safe during these unprecedented times.

So now I'd like to call the meeting into order. We have a tight schedule today, so in a few moments we'll have remarks from the FCC Chairman Ajit Pai and Commissioner Carr, followed by FCC staff presentations and updates consisting of four panels.

The panels will include a COVID-19 Challenges Update, Combating Robocalls, Advancing Emergency Response Capabilities, and Promoting the 21st Century Technologies and Services. Then we'll open the floor for discussion with the

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members and then to the public before wrapping up and adjourning.

So that's the agenda for today. So before beginning the agenda then, let's take roll.

So as I call your name, please turn on your audio and your video back on, then pause a second or two, state your name, your organization's name, and then mute your audio and turn off your video. It'll take a bit of time to do this, but it's very important that you get counted on the public record.

So I'm going to begin by, of course, introducing myself again. I'm Steve Pociask. I'm Chair and I'm with the American Consumer Institute. I'd like to call on, right now, the CAC's Vice Chair, Debra Berlyn.

Debra, can you join us, please?

MEMBER BERLYN: Yes, hi. Welcome. It's Debbie Berlyn, Vice Chair, representing the National Consumers League.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you. Thank you, Debbie. So, present. Let me call -- go through

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organizations. And again, toggle on. If you're not active, toggle off.

So AARP, do we have a representative there? And what I'm looking for, the primary representative and if there isn't one there, please, the alternate step in. So AARP?

MEMBER KAHSAI: Dawit Kahsai, AARP.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you.

Do we have a representative from America's Communications Association?

MEMBER HURLEY: Yes, Brian Hurley with ACA Connects, America's Communications Association.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Again, I've mentioned a couple times, remember to turn off your audio and video if you're not speaking.

Do we have someone from the American Legislative Exchange Coun?

MEMBER HAUENSCHILD: This is Jonathon Hauenschild.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you, Jonathon.

And Americans for Tax Reform, can you

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turn on your audio and video and --

MEMBER MCAULIFFE: Hey, Steve. Katie here.

CHAIR POCIASK: Hi, Katie.

Do we have a representative from the Appalachian Regional Commission?

MEMBER DEFALCO: Hi. Mark Defalco is here. No video, but I am present and accounted for.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you, Mark.

AT&T, do we have a representative online?

MEMBER LONG-DILLARD: Good morning, this is Vonda Long, AT&T.

CHAIR POCIASK: Yes, good morning.

Call For Action, do we have a representative? Call For Action?

(No response.)

CHAIR POCIASK: So let's move on to the Consumer Federation of America.

MEMBER LEECH: Irene Leech is present with the Consumer Federation of America.

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CHAIR POCIASK: Good morning, Irene.

Do we have a representative from the Consumer Technology Association?

MEMBER NEMETH: Good morning. This is Rachel Nemeth from CTA.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good morning.

Do we have a representative from Consumer Reports? Consumer Reports?

(No response.)

CHAIR POCIASK: Let's move on. Do we have a representative from CTIA?

MEMBER LEGGIN: Hi, Steve. This is Sarah Leggin for CTIA.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good morning, Sarah.

Remember again, to always turn off your audio and video once you're done speaking.

Do we have a representative from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network?

MEMBER ALKEBSI: Hello. This is Zainab Alkebsi with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Consumer Advocacy Network.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good morning. Do we

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have a representative from the Digital Policy Institute?

MEMBER UMANSKY: Good morning, Steve and everyone else. Barry Umansky with the Digital Policy Institute.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good to hear from you, Barry.

MEMBER UMANSKY: Good to be here.

CHAIR POCIASK: Do we have Eric Koch?

MEMBER KOCH: Good morning, everyone.

This is State Senator Eric Koch of Indiana serving as a Special Government Employee subject-matter expert.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you, Eric.

Johnny Kampis, are you there?

MEMBER KAMPIS: Yes, if I can get my video to start working, I am here.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Johnny is a Special Government Employee as a subject-matter expert, and so is Kyle. Kyle Hildebrand, are you on the line?

Kyle? Do we have a representative from

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--

MEMBER HILDEBRAND: Good morning, Steve. Steve. Kyle Hildebrand. I'm sorry. Can you hear me now?

CHAIR POCIASK: Yes.

MEMBER HILDEBRAND: Thank you.

CHAIR POCIASK: We can hear you.

Do we have a representative from the Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable?

MEMBER DAY: You do, Steve. Good morning. Joslyn Day, Massachusetts Department of Telecom and Cable.

CHAIR POCIASK: Wonderful to hear from you.

Michael Santorelli, are you here? Michael?

(No response.)

CHAIR POCIASK: Do we have a representative from the Milwaukee PBS?

MEMBER ZACHARY: Good morning, Steve. This is Bohdan Zachary on behalf of Milwaukee PBS.

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CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you.

Do we have a representative from the National Association of Broadcasters?

MEMBER WALKE: Hi, Steve. This is Larry Walke from NAB.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good to hear from you. Do we have a representative from the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates?

MEMBER BURTON: Good morning. This is Barbara Burton representing NASUCA.

CHAIR POCIASK: Got you. Wonderful. Good to hear you. Good morning.

Now do we have anyone from the National Consumer Law Center?

MEMBER WEIN: Yes. Good morning, everyone. Olivia Wein, National Consumer Law Center.

CHAIR POCIASK: Nice to hear from you. Do we have a representative from NCTA?

MEMBER MORRIS: Hi, this is Steve Morris from NCTA.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good morning.

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Do we have a representative from the Trevor Project?

MEMBER BRINTON: Hey, y'all. It's me, Sam Brinton. I use they and them as my pronouns.

I'm the Vice President of Advocacy and Government Affairs for the Trevor Project.

CHAIR POCIASK: Good to see you.

And, lastly, we have USTelecom. Do we have a representative online?

MEMBER FOLLANSBEE: Yes. Lynn Follansbee is here for USTelecom.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. So let me just take a moment here. If I missed anyone, please raise your hand through the Zoom feature so I can identify who you are. Hopefully I have everyone.

And so with that we have a quorum, so let's begin the agenda. We have a lot to do and I'd like to move on as quick as possible. So let's start, and let me just say good morning to everyone again. It is my distinct pleasure to introduce the FCC Chairman, Ajit Pai.

CHAIRMAN PAI: Well, thanks so much for

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that introduction Steve and it's great to see everybody on the call. I wish, of course, that we could be gathering together in the FCC's new headquarters but, of course, given the current situation we're not able to do that. But nonetheless, it's great to see everybody virtually.

I also want to thank everybody for serving on the Consumer Advisory Committee with a special thanks to, of course, our Chair Steve Pociask and our Vice Chair Debra Berlyn for their thoughtful and inclusive style of leadership. Steve and Debra, along with the full membership, have made really valuable contributions to the FCC's decision making during this iteration of the CAC. And I know that it takes a lot of time and effort and I want to thank you for doing that.

I also want to thank the working group chairs for all of their leadership efforts. For example, the co-chairs Brian Young and Kansas's own Sam Brinton of the Critical Call List and Call Blocking Working Group; the co-chairs Michael

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Santorelli and Thaddeus Johnson from the Caller ID Authentication Working Group; the co-chairs Dr. Krisztina Pusok and Linda Vandeloop of the Robocall Report Working Group; and co-chairs Vonda Long-Dillard and Joslyn Day of the Truth in Billing Working Group.

For each of you who have been herding the cats on those respective working groups, much appreciation from me and from the FCC. Speaking of the FCC, in addition, I want to thank the FCC staff who have been working with the Consumer Advisory Committee, in particular the folks from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau who help everything run smoothly.

They serve, of course, as the liaison between the broader FCC and you, and they've made presentations to the Committee and its working groups. And, in particular, Scott Marshall, who's the Designated Federal Officer -- or DFO -- as well as Greg Haledjian, the Deputy Designated DFO. You know, when in doubt, it's always good to have a DFO or DDFO with you.

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Finally, I want to thank all of you for, again, the time and the effort, the ideas and the consensus building that went into the recommendations that you submitted to us during this term of the CAC.

Since the beginning of my time as Chairman, fighting illegal robocalls has been our top consumer protection priority. This is something that, of course, has driven consumers crazy for many, many years. It's consistently been our top category of consumer complaints. But every step of the way you have partnered with us to help find practical solutions that help us help consumers to combat this scourge.

At the upcoming September meeting, we'll consider an order at the FCC that takes the next steps forward towards SHAKEN/STIR implementation and, in particular, this order would establish rules governing the intermediate providers and caller ID authentication in non-IP, non-Internet Protocol networks.

Specifically, it would require voice

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service providers to either upgrade their non-IP networks to IP and implement STIR/SHAKEN or work to develop a non-IP authentication solution. It would also enact pro-consumer provisions of the TRACED Act, like the prohibition of line item charges for caller ID authentication. Now that's, of course, going forward.

Looking backward, you've been really productive during this Committee term and here are just a few of the highlights. And time, of course, doesn't permit me to go through all of them, but in particular I wanted to highlight robocall blocking.

Last September, you adopted a recommendation addressing how best to educate consumers about the types of robocalls that may be blocked and possible mechanisms that would be used by voice providers to notify them that particular calls have been blocked. And this is something that was really important to helping us think about these issues.

Also caller ID authentication, last

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December, you adopted a recommendation regarding how best to educate consumers about the meaning of the SHAKEN/STIR caller ID authentication framework. You also advised us on some of the most important factors that providers should think about when they are displaying authentication and other information about the call to consumers.

It's, of course, one thing for providers to have that information, but what really matters is communicating that information in a way that's digestible to the typical consumer who needs that information.

Next, the Robocall Report which was, of course, consistent with the CAC's prior recommendation that you adopted in September of 2018. You helped us lay the groundwork for a robocall report on the availability and effectiveness of call blocking solutions, including advanced methods and tools to eliminate unwanted or illegal calls, as well as the impact of call blocking on 911 and public safety.

You provided us with helpful

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suggestions regarding sources of data, the need to use consistent definitions that distinguish between unwanted and illegal calls, and the clarification of which tools are network based versus those that are consumer initiated.

All in all, you've done a lot, but I can tell you that this work really makes a difference. I remember, still, a town hall that I did with seniors that was hosted in part by the AARP in Omaha a couple of years ago -- or, sorry, Lincoln, I believe it was. And just to hear how much angst they had about this issue, but also how much heart they took that they knew the FCC and consumer advocacy groups like you were on their side helping them try to find solutions, it really meant a lot.

And so the enthusiasm we heard in that room for some of the work we've been doing on robocalls, I'm sure, is replicated across the country. And as our cooperative efforts go forward, the FCC with some of the items that I've discussed and the CAC with some of the

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recommendations you've pursued, I'm quite confident that consumers will be in good stead in the time to come.

So again, I appreciate all of your efforts. You've contributed to our work in meaningful ways and I know it's been a lot of work, but it's a pleasure to be with you here today and I look forward to speaking with those of you who have expressed an interest in continuing your work on the next CAC, which we'll be announcing soon.

So thanks again. Sorry for hogging the microphone for so long, but all the best wishes to Steve, to Debra, and the entire team in your deliberations today.

CHAIR POCIASK: Terrific. Well, thank you so much for your remarks.

We have a couple minutes if we have questions. And by the way, I did hear just offline here that Michael Santorelli is on the roll and I missed you, so we have you counted off. But if anyone has questions, you have to raise your hand and I'll recognize you.

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Hopefully that feature's working. I don't know if I've missed anyone.

Okay. Well, Chairman --

CHAIRMAN PAI: Hey, if only congressional hearings were this way, my life would be a lot easier.

CHAIR POCIASK: Yeah. Well, look. I really do appreciate you coming out. As always, your remarks are insightful and very kind, giving us due consideration and recognition. Thank you so much for coming today.

CHAIRMAN PAI: Thanks again, Steve. And I hope all of you stay safe and be well in the time ahead.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you.

So now let's turn our attention to our next esteemed speaker, FCC Commissioner Brendan Carr.

MR. MARSHALL: Steve, this is Scott with the FCC. I'm trying to put a phone call into Commissioner Carr's office right now.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. So what we can

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do is we'll just start in and at any point we can interrupt and allow the Commissioner to speak. Does that make sense then, Scott?

MR. MARSHALL: Yes, that's great.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay.

So now let's just move on with our four panels. Our first panel will be addressing the COVID-19 challenges. So let me introduce the first speaker -- who will discuss accessibility during the pandemic -- is Diane Burstein, the Deputy Chief of Consumer Government Affairs Bureau.

Diane, are you there?

(No response.)

CHAIR POCIASK: So I guess we can come back to that too. So let's go with the second speaker. This is the COVID-19 scam alerts and updated consumer guidelines by Ed Bartholme, the Associate Chief over at the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. Ed, are you on?

MR. BARTHOLME: Can you guys see me?

CHAIR POCIASK: Yes, we can see you.

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MR. BARTHOLME: Okay.

CHAIR POCIASK: Ed, go ahead, please.

MR. BARTHOLME: So good morning, everyone, and thanks for giving me the opportunity to present and share some of the important work our education and outreach teams have been doing in response to the pandemic. Back in April, I shared that we were tracking coronavirus scams. And with the help of the Enforcement Bureau, other federal and state partners like the FTC and DOJ as well as industry and analytics companies, we've been able to continue to track emerging COVID-19 scams and publicize the tactics being used by fraudsters.

New variations in pandemic-themed hooks continue to evolve and often mirror news headlines. Early examples would mention generic test kits as a concept. More recent scams refer to antibody testing, so a much more specific hook that was kind of taken from headlines.

State and local contact tracing efforts have also spawned scams where fraudsters used phone

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calls and text messages to collect personal information or advance payment for required tests under the guise of contact tracing. Some of these scams were even spoofing local health department and contact tracing center numbers.

Contact tracing sort of as a concept presents a unique messaging challenge. Our guidance -- along with the FTC, state AGs and many consumer groups -- has long been don't answer calls from unknown numbers. Contact tracing calls are going to be an unknown number and time's often a factor and you want consumers to answer those calls.

So in our consumer alert we remind consumers to never click on links in text messages from unknown senders and to remember that legitimate contact tracers will not ask for insurance information, bank account information, credit card numbers, Social Security numbers, or payments. If a caller does ask for that sort of information, you just need to hang up. One second, sorry. The guide also contains other useful tips

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to spot and identify contact tracing scams.

We also released a post earlier this year on COVID scams that target older Americans.

We rolled this out in May, which as many of you know is Older Americans Month. And then recently or earlier this month, we put up a post about pharmacy scams that have been resurfacing with the COVID theme.

As our coronavirus consumer content has grown, the team developed a new page layout for our fcc.gov/COVID-scams page. That page is up on the slide here so you can take a look. It continues to have audio from scam calls, examples of scam texts, as well as more targeted alerts on particularly pernicious scams.

The page also houses our phone hygiene or how to clean your device poster and guide along with our home network optimization guide. The page has been visited over 120,000 times since it launched.

In an interesting wrinkle, we're seeing a reduction in unwanted call complaints, and

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analytics companies have continued to report a dropoff in unwanted call volume since March. Recent reports are indicating an upward trend in call volume, but they still remain below pre-March levels.

One recent report mentioned that political campaign calls have stepped in to fill some of the void left by scammers in this election year. Keep an eye out for an updated version of our political call and text guide to be released soon. Next slide, please.

So you may have noticed that our cellphone shaped character, Mo, has been making appearances in many of our consumer-themed social media posts and online. The slide up now shows our how to clean your device poster featuring Mo and tips like unplug your device before cleaning, use a lint-free cloth, then Mo's acting out many of the corresponding tips on the poster. Next slide.

This is our back-to-school graphic. It shows Mo with a backpack, mask and other

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communication-themed items a student in 2020 may need. The graphic promotes our back-to-school guide at fcc.gov/back-to-school. The guide aggregates a number of existing FCC consumer resources to help students and parents as they navigate a new school year, whether in person, online or a hybrid approach.

It contains a link to a list of providers that have gone above and beyond the Keep Americans Connected Pledge to serve their communities. A number of those providers still have offers available to households with students.

Beyond our online education content, our dedicated outreach team has been helping to spread the word on COVID-19 scams and our resources. Their bimonthly newsletters have featured articles on contact tracing scams, phone cleaning and COVID scams, and their monthly partner calls have featured presenters on these topics.

In addition, they've generated a number of timely email blasts to keep consumers informed.

If you're not getting their emails, newsletters

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or monthly partner call updates, please email outreach@fcc.gov to be added to the list or follow up with Scott and he will connect you with the team.

Beyond scams, we've also updated the Lifeline and E-rate consumer guides to reflect COVID-19-related waivers and extensions, and the fcc.gov/coronavirus web page has an updated list of the FCC's response and actions taken in response to the pandemic.

Pivoting away from COVID, as you can see from the agenda today and as you'll hear from a number of my colleagues as the meeting progresses, the FCC has also been very productive on a broad set of communication issues over the past few months.

To share a few of the other education and outreach highlights, I wanted to sort of tee up that over the summer we launched a new consumer guide and social media campaign on SIM swapping, port-out scams and other cellphone frauds.

To help mark Lifeline Awareness Week earlier this month in collaboration with our

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Disability Rights Office, we launched as ASL version of the Lifeline consumer guide. Our Office of Engineering and Technology released an updated FCC Speedtest app for consumers and that's available in both the iPhone and Android app stores.

And I just wanted to also slip in a quick plug for an upcoming public event. On October 8th at 2:00 p.m., the FCC will livestream a panel discussion to mark the tenth anniversary of the 21st Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act, or the CVAA.

The panel will be followed by the 2020 Chairman's Awards for Advancement and Accessibility, which this year for the first time will honor the contributions of individuals to communications accessibility. Previous awards had recognized specific technology achievements.

This year, we're sort of honoring people for their contributions through their work in the field.

I want to end by thanking you all for your dedication over the last two years. The

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guidance you share and the recommendations you make is appreciated and I hope that you'll please continue to stay in touch and reach out and let us know when and where we can be of help. Thanks.

CHAIR POCIASK: All right. This is Steve. Thank you, Ed, for that.

So it looks like we're going to have Commissioner Carr on in probably about ten minutes or so, and we do have Diane on. So what I was thinking is, Diane, before you start off with your part and then we can move on to Hayley, maybe we should just take like a nine-, ten-minute break. What do you think?

We'll just do that and we'll come back, and if the Commissioner's ready we'll start. Otherwise, we can go right back to Panel A. Does that make sense? So let's just do that. Let's just get back in about nine minutes. Thank you.

MEMBER BERLYN: Steve? Steve?

CHAIR POCIASK: Yes. Yeah.

MEMBER BERLYN: It's Debbie. Sorry, I can't find my hand-raising function here on my

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computer. But will we have an opportunity to ask questions of Ed and others?

CHAIR POCIASK: Yes, we're going to have questions at the end of each panel.

MEMBER BERLYN: Okay. And maybe when we take a break, can you just tell me where my hand-raise function is, because I have searched everywhere on my thing here.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Yeah. We'll take a break and maybe if Gerard's on, he can probably walk you through it.

MEMBER BERLYN: Okay, thank you.

MR. SIERADZKI: This is David Sieradzki from the FCC. I'm one of the co-hosts behind the scenes. If anyone wants to use the hand-raising function, there's a reactions button at the bottom of your screen. It's a smiley face with a little plus.

And if you click that there's a little waving hands on the left side of the pop-up menu, so that's where you can find the hand-raising function.

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CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Great. Thank you. All right. Well, let's just take a quick break and we'll be right back.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:05 a.m. and resumed at 11:12 a.m.)

CHAIR POCIASK: So now let me turn your attention to our next speaker -- esteemed speaker, I should say -- our FCC Commissioner, Brendan Carr.

Commissioner, you can please make sure your video and audio are turned on, and then pause a second before beginning. Thank you so much for your remarks.

Just one minute; we're waiting.

MEMBER BERLYN: I think he just stepped away, Steve. He should be back shortly.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. So, following this, what we will do is we'll continue with Panel A, and Diane Burstein will be talking about the accessibility during the pandemic. And she has some slides for us to cover. So, we'll do that in just a couple of minutes.

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MEMBER BERLYN: What time was our break supposed to end, Steve?

CHAIR POCIASK: I didn't really set up a firm time. I just said nine or ten minutes.

MEMBER BERLYN: Yeah, because I think the screen said 11:15, as I recall. So, that may be when the Commissioner will return.

CHAIR POCIASK: Yeah, that's fine. Yeah, we can hold for another minute.

(Long pause.)

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay, I'll tell you what. Hopefully, everyone is back and we're ready to go again. So, let's do this. While we're waiting for -- let me see if I can check here.

While we're waiting for the Commissioner to return, would you be available, Diane, to start with your portion of the presentation?

MS. BURSTEIN: Good morning, Steve. Yes, and I'll just pause if the Commissioner comes back on and let him proceed, if that's okay.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you for doing

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that.

MS. BURSTEIN: Yeah, sure. No problem. Thank you for having me this morning.

And I also wanted to bring remarks from Patrick Webre, CGB's Chief, who unfortunately couldn't be here today to address the group, but he wanted me to pass along his appreciation for all the important work that the CAC has done and has accomplished during this term. So, thank you, on behalf of Patrick, for that.

I'm Diane Burstein, Deputy Bureau Chief of CGB, and this morning I was going to spend a few minutes talking about what CGB has been doing during the pandemic to ensure the accessibility of information for people with disabilities.

Once the pandemic hit, CGB took action to ensure the uninterrupted provision of telecommunications relay services, or TRS. Providers of various different forms of TRS were experiencing a number of different issues.

First of all, there was a sharp increase in traffic levels, as more people were working from

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home and using the telephone for longer periods of time.

Due to social distancing and stay-at-home orders, there was also a sharp reduction in the number of employees called communications assistants who ordinarily could handle calls from call centers, due to these restrictions.

So, in March the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau granted a waiver order that, among other things, relaxed a number of rules to allow more CAs to work from home and to make certain operational changes, in order to deal with the pandemic.

We've later granted a waiver to expand the pool of people who could provide American sign language interpreting, to ensure that there was sufficient capacity there.

And given the absence of material changes in the Coronavirus and various restrictions, we've extended the waiver several times, including, most recently, until November 30

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of this year. Next slide, please.

On the video side, we also took measures to ensure that people had access to emergency information. And under the FCC's emergency information rules, critical details about the pandemic, such as sheltering-in-place areas that are affected, fire emergencies evacuation routes and the like, must be presented both orally and visually.

If presented in the video portion of a newscast, for example, it must be made available for blind people by orally describing in the main audio what's being presented visually, and when it interrupts another program through use of a crawl, for example, with emergency information, it has to be accompanied by an oral tone, and then conveyed orally on a secondary audio stream so that blind people get these critical details.

Emergency information that's provided in the audio must also be accessible to deaf viewers through closed captioning, or a visual presentation method.

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We also made clear that there are a number of instances where state and local governments present sign language interpreters on the screen, and the best practice is to make sure that the sign language interpreter is visible, in order to benefit viewers who use American sign language. Next slide, please.

In addition, in May the FCC and the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency released a letter to the governors and DC Mayor about providing access to certain essential workers, to ensure they have appropriate resources and access to facilities.

And as part of that, businesses and personnel that provide communications support to people with disabilities, as well as TRS providers and closed captioning providers, were mentioned.

In short, we've been doing a lot to make sure that there's uninterrupted services during the pandemic, and as part of your packet today, we list the resources that you can reach out to, in case you need assistance with those measures,

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and how to contact the Disability Rights Office.

So, thank you very much. I'm happy to answer questions later.

CHAIR POCIASK: Great. We have one more speaker for this panel. So, David, did you mention that the Commissioner is available?

MR. SIERADZKI: Yes, he is. So, I'll leave it to you, Steve, about whether you want to ask the Commissioner to speak or continue with the panel.

CHAIR POCIASK: I'm ready. Let's just interrupt it and allow the Commissioner to come on. I'm really pleased that he was able to do this, and we really look forward to his remarks. So, Commissioner, if you're able to join us, please unmute and start your video. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Thanks. Can you hear me? I think I've got my audio on but it doesn't look like it's letting put my video back on yet.

All right, it looks like we're good to go now. Thank you so much. Apologize for the

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confusion. A few meetings that were running over top of each other there.

Really appreciated the opportunity to address the group. And thank you so much for really the public service that you all are doing.

I know you have day jobs and are very, very busy, and taking on this additional work is really important.

I think obviously, as we're all addressing each other remotely, that just highlights how much of our world has changed with COVID-19. And almost just overnight our lives shifted onto the Internet for meetings, for educating our kids, for telehealth, and we saw just a massive in Internet usage.

I know you all are talking a little bit today about telehealth. And it's really been just amazing to me to see just the massive uptake in telehealth usage with COVID-19. I've had a chance to visit with healthcare providers that have used FCC COVID funding from Nevada to Michigan, Ohio, I was in Florida last week.

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And to a person, every single one of these providers talked about going from almost no telehealth visits or a handful of telehealth visits, you just, an order of magnitude increase in a matter of weeks, and they continue to tell us that without the FCC support they wouldn't have been able to do that.

So, I think the focus that you have on telehealth here is going to be very important, and the focus you bring on the consumer. At the end of the day, that's absolutely why we do everything we can at the FCC, is to improve the lives of the consumers that are using these full ranges of telehealth and telecommunications services.

So, I don't want to sidetrack too much from the panel, other than to say how grateful I am for the service that you all do. It's noticed, we watch, we observe everything you all do, your recommendations, even just the comments you all make, and we filter that into our decision-making at the FCC. So, thank you so much for your work on this. And I'm particularly interested in some

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of the telehealth work that will be coming out.
Thanks.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you
Commissioner. Thank you very much. This is Steve
again. As I think David explained earlier, at the
bottom of the Zoom there is a reactions button.

So, if you have any questions for the
Commissioner, you're able to hit that button, and
there's a sign to wave, and I will recognize you
and we can get a question or two in while we still
have the Commissioner here online.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Yeah, happy to do
it.

CHAIR POCIASK: Well, I can't really
see anything for sure Commissioner. I don't see
any questions, so I think we're pretty well set.

Look, I want to thank you so much for your service
and what you've done this year. And I appreciate
your comments and guidance to the group. So, thank
you, and have a great weekend.

COMMISSIONER CARR: Thank you. I
really appreciate it. Thanks.

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CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. So, let's do this if we may. We have one more speaker here on the Panel A. And let's do this. Let's have that speaker now, and then we'll move back to the agenda, as we were.

So, what we're going to talk about today, we have a presentation on the Update of Telehealth Initiatives, a really important topic, from Hayley Steffen, the Attorney-Advisor of Telecommunications Access and Policy Division. Now, that's with the Wireline Competition Bureau. Let me turn it over to Hayley.

MS. STEFFEN: Thanks, Steve. Can everyone hear me? Steve, maybe you can confirm, I think.

All right, I'm Hayley Steffen. I'm an Attorney-Advisor in WCB, the Telecommunications Access and Policy Division. And like Steve said, I will be presenting an update on FCC's Telehealth Initiative, and talking a bit about the COVID-19 Telehealth Program that Commissioner Carr just mentioned, and our upcoming Connected Care Pilot

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Program. Next slide, please.

All right. So, the COVID-19 Telehealth Program originated out of the CARES Act that Congress passed at the end of March. Congress appropriated the FCC \$200 million to help eligible healthcare providers in their provision of connected care services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

After Congress passed the CARES Act, the Commission acted swiftly and adopted a report and order on April 2, 2020. The report and order established the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.

Shortly thereafter, the Commission started to accept applications on April 13, 2020.

The Commission accepted applications between April 13 and June 25, and the Commission received thousands of applications.

We prioritized funding to eligible healthcare providers who are located in areas that were hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, and where the funding would have the most impact.

On July 8, 2020, the Commission

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exhausted the \$200 million in appropriated funds and ended up issuing 539 funding commitments to healthcare providers in 47 states, plus Washington, DC and Guam.

For more information about the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, you can visit www.fcc.gov/covid-19-telehealth-program.

Like I said, the Commission has committed all the funds. We're currently in the invoicing stage of the program, which means that healthcare providers are submitting their invoices and the Commission is reimbursing them for those eligible services. Next slide, please.

So, the Connected Care Pilot Program is the upcoming telehealth initiative from the Commission. It is the result of an almost two-year rulemaking process that started in 2018, initiated by Commissioner Carr through a notice of inquiry.

And notice of inquiries just basically ask how the Commission could examine how telehealth could be expanded and how the Universal Service Fund could use funds to expand the provision of

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telehealth.

There was a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking last summer, and with the COVID-19 pandemic, that kind of expedited the Connected Care Pilot, and the Connected Care Pilot was established in the same report and order as the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, on April 2.

The Pilot Program is a limited duration program that will make available up to \$100 million of universal service support over a three-year funding period, to help defray healthcare providers' qualifying costs of providing connected care services, particularly to low-income Americans and veterans.

And unlike the COVID-19 Telehealth Program, Connected Care is under the legal authority of the Universal Service Fund, like the other USF programs the Commission administers.

So, there are a lot more regulatory rules and regulations attached to the Connected Care Pilot that were not necessarily attached to the COVID-19 Telehealth Program. Next slide,

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please.

So, who can apply? Like I said, because the Connected Care Pilot will be under the legal authority of Section 254 of the Telecommunications Act, the participants who are eligible to apply are healthcare providers in 254.

This list is listed in 254 and it includes post-secondary educational institutions offering healthcare instruction, teaching hospitals and medical schools, community health centers, or health centers providing healthcare to migrants, local health departments or agencies, community mental health centers, not-for-profit hospitals, well-health clinics, skilled nursing facilities, or a consortia of healthcare providers consisting of one or more entities falling into the first seven categories.

Interested applicants can determine whether they're eligible, whether they fall into one of those categories, by filing an FCC Form 460, which is available on the Universal Service Administrative Company's -- USAC's -- website.

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The services that will be eligible will be 85 percent of the qualifying costs of patient broadband Internet access services, healthcare provider broadband data connections, other connected care information services, and certain network equipment.

The Pilot Program will not fund end-user devices or medical equipment. So, this is one of the differences between the Connected Care Pilot and the COVID-19 Telehealth Program.

Connected Care will not be able to fund end-user devices, such as tablets or smartphones. That's one of the biggest differences. You can go to the next slide.

The application for the Connected Care Pilot Program is not yet available. The Commission issued a public notice earlier this month about the application requirements, so interested applicants can start to collect that information and prepare for the application becoming available.

The Commission will announce at a later

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date when the application filing window will be open, and interested applicants can check on the FCC's Connected Care webpage for updates and announcements about the Connected Care Pilot Program. The webpage can be found at www.fcc.gov/connectedcarepilot. Next slide, please.

Thank you, and I will be happy to answer questions during the question portion.

CHAIR POCIASK: Great. Thank you, Hayley. This is Steve again. So, at this time I'd like to see if there are any questions for Panel A.

As was mentioned earlier, there's a reactions button at the bottom of your page that you can click on to give me notice of that. We heard on Panel A from Ed, Diane, and now Hayley.

Do we have any questions?

Okay, so let me close my screen here, and Deborah Berlyn, I'd like to recognize you.

MEMBER BERLYN: Hi everybody. So, I'm not sure exactly who this question is for. But

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first, I want to thank the entire Bureau for all the work that you've been doing, and particularly the outreach group.

I've received your updates, your newsletter, and am very impressed with everything that you've been doing during this time period.

So, I do have one question and I'm not sure if this is for you Ed, or if this is someone else who's on your team. I just wanted to know, there's, of course, a lot of buzz about Lifeline.

And I just wanted to know what update you might have about outreach on Lifeline.

I know every year there's an effort to reach out with Lifeline, and wanted to know if there was any update about that.

MR. BARTHOLME: Hey Debbie. Sorry, it takes a minute to toggle mute and turn your video back on, and all that good stuff. But in reference to Lifeline outreach, Lifeline Awareness Week was earlier this month, and that's a collaborative effort between the FCC, NASUCA and NARUC, I believe. And I apologize if I got the wrong

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acronym thrown in there.

But there were materials prepared for that information that was sent out along those lines. The outreach team has also done some direct email outreach, to make sure people are aware of some of the many Lifeline waivers that the Commission has put into effect starting back in March, and updating as needed over the past few months.

In addition to that, there was a joint letter as well that was signed. And I apologize, that came from our Intergovernmental Affairs Group, as well as our Wireline Competition Bureau.

But earlier this year there was a joint letter that was signed with some state entities and the Chairman, to go out about sort of raising awareness about Lifeline, making sure people were aware of the waivers that are in place.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Well, thank you, Ed. Deborah?

MEMBER BERLYN: Yeah, I just wanted to say thank you for that update, and appreciate the

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work that everybody does there.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. So, this is Steve again and I'm back. I'd like to move ahead with Panel B. We're pretty much on schedule.

So, this is on combating robocalls, and the first presentation will be on call-blocking report and order by Jerusha Burnett, who is the Attorney-Advisor for the Consumer Advisory Division for the Consumer and Government Affairs Bureau. So, let's hear from our speaker. You have the slides up?

MS. BURNETT: One moment. I'm trying to get my video unmuted. It doesn't seem to want to let me. I don't know why.

MR. MARSHALL: Jerusha, this is Scott. You might want to --

MS. BURNETT: There it is.

MR. MARSHALL: Okay, you got it? Okay, good.

MS. BURNETT: Yes, my apologies. So, this is Jerusha Burnett. I'm an attorney in the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau's

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Consumer Policy Division. And just a side note, I apologize if my dog starts whining. He's not happy that I shut him out of the room.

So, issued in July 2020, the call-blocking order adopts two safe harbors for voice service providers of blocked calls. Both of these safe harbors provide protection from liability under the Communications Act and the Commission's rules. The order also establishes certain protections for callers.

The first safe harbor, built on the 2019 Declaratory Ruling, which made clear that voice service providers may block calls believed to be unwanted based on reasonable analytics, on an informed opt-out basis.

It then incorporates caller-ID authentication information, to provide protection from liability for voice service providers that block based on reasonable analytics, which must include caller-ID authentication information designed to identify unwanted calls on an informed opt-out basis.

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The requirement to incorporate caller-ID authentication information means that at a minimum, a terminating voice service provider seeking safe harbor must have deployed an effective caller-ID authentication framework within their own network, accept caller-ID authentication information transmitted by an upstream voice service provider, and incorporate that information into its analytics where that information is available.

The terminating voice service provider may also rely on this safe harbor, even when blocking where that information is not available, so long as it incorporates it into analytics wherever possible.

So, at this time only the STIR/SHAKEN framework qualifies. But the order does leave open the option for other authentication methods, to satisfy the required caller-ID authentication information components.

The second safe harbor provides protection for voice service providers that block

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all traffic to certain upstream providers that are bad actors.

Specifically, if the Commission notifies a provider of illegal traffic on their network and that provider fails to effectively mitigate this traffic, or fails to implement effective measures to prevent new and renewing customers from using their network to originate illegal calls, then a downstream provider may block calls from this bad-actor provider.

The order also directs the bad-actor provider to notify both the traceback consortium and the Commission of the steps they have taken to effectively mitigate the illegal traffic, within 48 hours. And we expect the downstream provider to notify the bad actor before blocking calls.

As for the established protections, there are three main elements. First, a voice service provider should not block calls to 911.

Second, the order directs voice service providers to make all reasonable efforts to ensure

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that calls from public safety answering points and government outbound emergency numbers are not blocked.

And finally, it requires voice service providers to designate a single point of contact to report blocking errors, at no charge to callers or other voice service providers.

Blocking providers must investigate and resolve these blocking disputes in a reasonable amount of time and at no cost to the caller, so long as the complaint is made in good faith.

The order also included an NPRM, seeking comment on further implementation of the TRACED Act, including additional blocking and related safe harbors, as well as further protection for both callers and consumers.

For example, the NPRM sought comment on matters such as expanding the safe harbor, to include network-based blocking of calls that are highly likely to be illegal based on reasonable analytics, and on requiring voice service providers to provide, at the request of the

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subscriber, a list of blocked calls that were intended for that subscriber's numbers.

The reply comment window for this NPRM is still open, and it closes on September 29. At the end of the panel, I'm happy to take questions, though I note that with regard to the open proceeding and the NPRM, I may be unable to take questions on that point. Thank you.

CHAIR POCIASK: Well, thank you. That's a really interesting topic and I have another one. It's Call-Blocking Tools Report. And our next speaker is Mika Savir. She's the Attorney-Advisor for the Consumer Policy Division of the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.

MS. SAVIR: Hi. I'd like to thank Scott and Greg, and the Consumer Advisory Committee, for the opportunity to talk about the Call-Blocking Tools Report.

This report was released on June 25, 2020. And call-blocking is one way for the voice service providers to reduce the number of illegal and unwanted calls that would otherwise reach

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consumers.

Unwanted robocalls can be annoying, and can also be used to perpetuate fraud. The Commission has sought to protect American consumers from illegal and unwanted calls, by authorizing voice service providers to block such calls as a default before they ever reach the consumers.

Since 2017, the Commission has permitted voice service providers to block certain likely fraudulent calls.

Specifically, in the 2017 Call-Blocking Report and Order, the Commission authorized voice service providers to block by default at the network level, calls using invalid, unallocated, or unused numbers, or numbers on the DNO, or do-not-originate, list.

When the subscriber's number is spoofed by robocaller without the subscriber's consent, the calls purporting to be from that number are most likely illegal.

Subsequently, in the 2019

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Call-Blocking Declaratory Ruling, the Commission clarified that voice service providers could offer call-blocking services on an opt-out basis to consumers, where blocking is based on reasonable analytics designed to identify unwanted calls.

The Commission also stated that voice service providers may offer to block calls from numbers not in a consumer's contact list on an opt-in basis.

On June 25, 2020, the Bureau released the report on the deployment and implementation of call blocking and caller-ID implementation.

The report was required by the 2019 Call-Blocking Declaratory Ruling. Specifically, it required that the Bureau prepare a report on the state of deployment of advanced methods and tools to eliminate such calls, including the impact of call blocking on 911 and public safety. The Bureau will issue a second report on these issues in June 2021.

In drafting the report, the Bureau sought comment on certain call-blocking issues,

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and received comments from voice service providers, third-party analytics companies, trade associations, and other parties.

Most voice service providers state that following the 2017 Call-Blocking Report and Order, they block at the network level calls from telephone numbers on the DNO list, and calls that appear to be from invalid, unallocated, or unused numbers.

And in addition to the default network blocking permitted by the 2017 Call-Blocking Report and Order, most voice service providers offer call blocking and labeling services for unwanted calls on an opt-in or opt-out basis, generally through a third-party analytics company partner. Consumers can also obtain call-blocking and labeling services directly from such third party analytics companies.

While the specific blocking and labeling programs vary, the Commission's actions have resulted in greater choice for consumers.

For example, wireless carriers offer

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AT&T's Call-Protect, Verizon's Call-Filter, and T-Mobile's Scam-ID and Scam-Block.

Other voice service providers, such as CenturyLink, Cox and Comcast, offer their customers a third-party call-blocking program from the third-party company, Nomorobo.

The report contains details on the offerings and practices of a number of voice service providers.

For the sake of this presentation, let's take a more detailed look at one provider's blocking services. This provider offers call-blocking options for wireless and wireline customers.

For network-based blocking, it uses fraud investigators to target suspected illegal, high-volume callers. This provider has blocked several billion such calls in the past few years.

In addition to the default network-based blocking, this provider offers a call-blocking service to wireless customers on an opt-out basis. This is offered through a

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third-party analytics company, and has blocked or labeled over a billion suspected fraud calls, and over three billion other calls.

This particular service automatically blocks suspected fraud calls and blocks suspect calls. This provider also offers services to its VOIP customers, and has a service that works on all wireline networks and automatically blocked robocalls from ringing, while allowing customers to blacklist specific names and numbers, up to one thousand names and numbers.

Voice service providers describe their blocking/labeling options on their website. Consumers can also obtain blocking/labeling services directly from third-party analytics companies, so they have blocking options, in addition to what their own wireless or wireline voice service provider offers.

Voice service providers are taking these measures to protect their customers from illegal and unwanted calls, and has succeeded in blocking millions of illegal and unwanted calls.

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The call-blocking report, available on our website, provides a useful summary of the current state of call-blocking services offered by voice service providers following the Commission's 2017 Call-Blocking Report and Order, and 2019 Call-Blocking Declaratory Ruling.

This is an area that is undergoing a lot of change due to the Commission's efforts to protect consumers from robocalls. We will discuss updated information in the 2021 call-blocking report next year.

I would like to thank the Consumer Advocacy Committee for the opportunity to share this information on call-blocking.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Well, thank you, Mika. So, we have one more presentation before we go to Q&A. This one is on Hospital Robocall Protection Group. It's Donna Cyrus. She's a designated federal officer for the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.

MS. CYRUS: Hi there. Good morning everyone. Thank you for having me. I am an

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Attorney-Advisor in the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs in the FCC's Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau.

I'm also the designated federal officer for the Hospital Robocall Protection Group. And I will be talking about that this morning.

On June 25, 2020, the Commission established the -- one second please. Do I have slides? I should have some slides, right?

MR. HALEDJIAN: Sorry, Donna. We'll get those up in just a second.

MS. CYRUS: Okay.

Okay. All right. So, the first slide, please? Next slide. Thank you.

On June 25, 2020 the Commission established the Hospital Robocall Protection Group, or the HRPG, a new federal advisory committee, dedicated to combating robocalls to hospitals.

Congress directed the FCC to establish the HRPG and the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence Act of 2019. That's

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a mouthful, so we refer to it as the TRACED Act.

The HRPG also is organized under, and operates in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, or FACA.

The TRACED Act requires that the HRPG could use hospital robocall mitigation recommendations no later than the week of December 21 of 2020. Next slide, please.

In accordance with the TRACED Act, the HRPG will issue best-practices regarding the following:

How voice service providers can better combat unlawful robocalls made to hospitals;

How hospitals can better protect themselves from such calls, including by using unlawful robocall mitigation techniques;

And how the federal government and state governments can help combat such calls. Next slide.

HRPG's initial meeting was on July 27, 2020. Since then, its three working groups have been actively meeting and working to produce the

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required recommendations.

The TRACED Act also requires that the Commission complete a proceeding no later than June 2021, to assess the extent to which the voluntary adoption of the best-practices can be facilitated to protect hospitals and other institutions.

Thank you all. I'll take any questions. And more information can be found regarding the HRPB on our page on the FCC's website.

I understand all of these links are going to be provided to you in written format.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Do we have any questions for anyone on this panel? Okay, so we have -- and I'd like to recognize Irene Leech.

Irene, if you'd like to go ahead and turn on your mic and let me close mine down.

MEMBER LEECH: Thanks, Steve. My question is for Mika. I may have missed it, but do the call-blocking services cost the consumer extra, or are they included in the base rate?

MS. SAVIR: They do not cost extra, although some carriers offer like a higher level

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of caller-ID or something. But just the basic call-blocking services do not cost extra.

CHAIR POCIASK: Is that good, Irene?

MEMBER LEECH: Yes. Thank you.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. We have time for one more question, if anyone else would like to ask something for any of the presenters today.

Again, the question is down at -- you hit the toggle at the very bottom. There's a button that says reactions. And then you hit the hand wave.

Okay, well seeing none, let's check the time here. It's just about noon.

So, we're scheduled for a lunch break coming up, so why don't we come back around 12:35.

We'll come back just a little earlier than scheduled, just to make sure we're keeping up on time.

So, let's take a break, come back at 12:35, and we'll do a countdown to begin. So, let's just break for lunch.

(Whereupon the above-entitled matter went off the record at 11:59 a.m. and resumed at

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12:41 p.m.)

CHAIR POCIASK: Well, welcome back from the lunch break. It looks like we have another panel coming up. This one deals with advancing emergency response capabilities. And we have two speakers. As before, we'll stop at the end of both speakers and just take any questions, if there are questions. So, let's begin then.

So, the first speaker today is PSAP's Real-Time Text Capacity, by Suzy Singleton. She's the Chief Disability Rights Officer for the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau. So, Suzy, I'm going to turn my video off, and if you pause, I'll leave it up to you to take care of this.

Thank you.

MS. SINGLETON: Yeah, thank you, Steve. I hope everyone had a great lunch, and welcome back. I was invited to speak to you today about real-time text technology and 911 call centers -- as you know, Public Safety Answering Points, or PSAPs. So, we go to the next slide,

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please.

TTY technology has been around since the 1970s for people who rely on text-based communication over the telephone network, mostly people with speech disabilities, or people who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or who otherwise are not able to speak. The TTY technology, however, was developed for use on that PST and the public switched telephone network. And the FCC implemented rules to clarify that carriers must support TTY technology on their networks.

Now, with the advent of the transition to IP-based networks in an IP environment, we've discovered that TTYS do not work well on those networks. There is packet loss, distortion, transmission errors, that have significantly impacted the quality of communication. And TTY usage has significantly declined as people have migrated over to using things like smartphones and the wireless environment. So, real-time text was recognized as being a possible solution in an IP environment. And AT&T filed a petition with us,

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the FCC, to request that we update our rules to transition to RTT.

RTT can be fully integrated with mainstream voice communications -- that is, simultaneous voice and text -- and can be used with off-the-shelf devices, and uses Unicode character sets, things like emoticons, symbols, different language character sets. It is a very advanced technology, as compared to TTY. Can we go to the next slide, please?

In December of 2016, the FCC adopted rules to facilitate the transition from TTYs to RTT over wireless Internet protocol technology, so it's IP technologies. Those new rules permitted the support of RTT in lieu of support of those legacy TTYs. Covered entities that support RTT in compliance with the FCC's rules, would then be relieved of the requirement to support TTY on all of their wireless networks and equipment, including services and devices used in legacy, non-IP environments and facilities.

So, what are those covered entities?

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Mainly two. The first are IP-based wireless providers, and the second is the manufacturers of the end-user equipment. Next slide, please.

Our rules do spell out what the required RTT core functionalities are. In specific, they must be interoperable across networks and services. You must use the RFC-4103 as the safe harbor standard. These must be backwards compatible with TTY. And I want to pause a moment here to emphasize the importance of that particular requirement, because most 911 call centers across the country are still mid-transition themselves, from legacy networks over to IP networks, that is NG911 -- Next Generation 911.

At this time, most of them may still be using TTYs because of the requirement under Title 2 of the ADA, the Americans with Disabilities Act. So, they are already able to handle TTY calls, and would then be able to handle incoming RTT calls. So, in that way you can feel free to reach out to your PSAPS. It's really important to us that we had that backwards compatibility with

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TTYs for that end, and support for 911 communications.

Another one of these requirements must be able to contact 911. And then, simultaneous text and voice in the same call session, which is a very important function, that you be able to switch back and forth between a voice call and text call on that same call session, so you don't end up with two separate platforms where if your voice call doesn't work. For example, you've got a shooter or an emergency situation where you don't want to be making noise, then you need to switch over and start a new call session.

Instead, you have that same line, that same call session, that you can toggle back and forth to maintain your safety and effective communication with 911 in the event of an emergency. You must also be able to send and receive calls with the same phone number. Next slide, please.

The compliance timelines. We had two major timelines, the first for service providers,

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and one for manufacturers. And you'll see those timelines have already passed, in particular, for carriers. And for our Tier 1 CMRS providers, which would include the nationwide carriers, such as AT&T, Verizon, T-Mobile and Sprint, those carriers are already in compliance now.

They have either one of two options in order to be in compliance: a downloadable RTT app or plug-in to support real-time text, or having already implemented a native RTT functionality in their core network offered in at least one handset model that supports RTT, including support of RTT in future design specifications.

The non-Tier-1 providers, again we're talking about not typically nationwide providers, with the exception of resellers, must be in compliance by June 30, 2020. We are now reviewing some waiver requests from some of those non-Tier-1 carriers. And that is in the docket.

By December 31, 2019 -- I'm sorry, that has already passed too, but I'm just reading out the text on this slide here. By June 30, 2021 each

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non-Tier-1 CMRS provider, including resellers, that chooses to support RTT shall have implemented RTT for all new authorized users and devices. Now, for manufacturers, that timeline has also passed, December 31, 2018, for those that choose to support RTT in lieu of TTY support. They shall implement RTT in newly manufactured equipment if readily achievable, or unless not achievable. Next slide, please. It's our last one.

Now, PSAP readiness for RTT. Please bear in mind that they should already be ready.

They have TTYs and, because RTT is meant to be backwards compatible with TTYs, that is one thing to keep in mind.

Now, for PSAPs to receive RTT, the FCC has rules that require that carriers deliver text messages to PSAPs that are text-capable within six months of a PSAP request. And the FCC maintains a text-to-911 registry, and RTT will be included once OMB approves. And the comment period for that updated form closed early September 2020, with no opposition, so soon we should be announcing this

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new feature of our text-to-911 registry. And the URL for that is fcc.gov/text-to-911.

The FCC also hosted, in October 2018, a PSAP RTT awareness day. I mention that because that page is still available on our website and has a whole host of resources for 911 call centers.

And the URL for that is www.fcc.gov/RTT

On August 3, 2020, NENA published a draft titled, NENA PSAP readiness for real-time text information document, with guidelines for installation and use of RTT in public safety answering points and call centers. The comment period just closed September 11, 2020.

One last thought for you. I'm sure that some of you have been all over the country.

California, for example, has implemented a law. The 438 PSAPs there under California government code, Section 53112, by January 1, 2021 each California PSAP shall be RTT- and SMS-enabled. That will impact a total of 438 PSAPs. So, you can certainly check into your area by looking at the registry. I'd be happy to answer any questions

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after, I believe, our next speaker. And thank you very much for your time.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you, Suzy. I really appreciate that. So, the next speaker, before we go to Q&A, the topic is on National Suicide and Mental Health Lifeline. Our speaker, Jesse Goodwin, is the Attorney-Advisor at the Competition Policy Bureau for the Wireline Competition Bureau. Excuse me, the Competition Policy Division at the Wireline Competition Bureau. Jesse?

MR. GOODWIN: Thanks. Good afternoon everyone. My name is Jesse Goodwin and I'll be presenting on the recent designation of 988 for the purposes of the National Suicide Hotline. If we could go to the next slide, please.

The FCC has designated 988 for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline to be available July 16, 2022. 988 is not active yet.

If you want to call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, call the current number, which is 1-800-273-TALK. The presentation today

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will cover the background to designating 988, the NPRM that led to our report and order, and the next steps that will be occurring. Next slide, please.

Did we skip a slide? No. Okay, there we go.

So, on August 14, 2018 Congress passed the National Suicide Hotline Improvement Act of 2018, which tasked the FCC with examining and reporting on the technical feasibility of designating a shorter number, a simple, easy-to-remember, three-digit dialing code for a national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. One year later, FCC staff, in consultation with the North American Numbering Council, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, and Department of Veterans Affairs, released a report recommending the FCC initiate a rulemaking to adopt 988 as a single-purpose, three-digit code of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. Next slide, please.

So, why did we choose 988? We found that it was a unique three-digit code, and so obviates the need to age an existing N11 code.

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For example, something like 511, 611, 711, etc., and should reduce the overall implementation timeline. And we also found that a wholly unique three-digit code would be less disruptive to existing users; that consumer educational campaigns for a unique three-digit code would be simpler, and likely more effective, than those necessary for repurposing or expanding use of an existing N11 code; and that 988 is less technically complicated than using other unique three-digit dialing codes. Next slide, please.

On December 16, 2019 the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that proposed to designate 988 as the three-digit dial-in code for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. We received a robust record of comments from the mental health community, telecommunications companies, and other interested parties. And on July 16, 2020 the FCC adopted a report and order that adopted 988 as the three-digit code for the lifeline, and required providers to implement 988 within two years. Next slide, please.

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The order requires all telecommunication carriers, interconnected Voice Over Internet Protocol providers, and one-way VOIP providers, to make any network changes necessary to ensure that users can dial 988 to reach the lifeline, by July 16, 2022. Providers will route calls to 988 to the existing toll-free access number, which, again, is 1-800-273-TALK, or 8255.

It requires that current providers implement ten-digit dialing in areas that both use seven-digit dialing, and 988 as the first three digits of a number. The North American Numbering Plan Administrator is currently working with providers toward implementation. Next slide, please.

If you're in need of non-voice communication, there are several ways to get help.

There's several text messaging options for suicide prevention that are available nationwide, including a short code to reach the Veterans Crisis Line, which is 838255, and the non-profit Crisis Text Line, which is 741741. The lifeline offers

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online chat as well, and maintains a separate TTY number. The FCC did not mandate text messaging or direct video calling to 988, because it does not control the features of the lifeline. Next slide, please.

And that concludes the presentation.

I'll be happy to take any questions during the Q&A.

CHAIR POCIASK: Great. So, as before, if you have questions, please signal it to me so I can see your raised hand and call on you. Okay, so before I turn off my screen here, I'd like to recognize Irene Leech, who has a question.

MEMBER LEECH: Thanks, Steve. Jesse, why does it take two years to implement this?

MR. GOODWIN: So, there are a number of things that need to be done before 988 can be available nationwide. On the technology side of things, there are just issues with a variety of types of switches, namely legacy switches, that either need to be upgraded or replaced outright, in order to support a new short code like 988.

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Additionally, there are just other sort of logistical hurdles that we need to make sure are taken care of before implementation. For example, we want to make sure that there's enough time for the lifeline to get staffed and resources necessary to handle the increased call capacity that we expect will occur, and just in general we found that the date we set was the earliest technically-feasible date that we could.

We recognized the pressing need to get 988 implemented nationwide as soon as possible, but we also have to bear in mind the technical challenges that come along with that. As I mentioned during the presentation as well, there is also the issue of ten-digit dialing. There are many places across the country that current have permissive seven-digit dialing. That means they don't have to dial in the area code before they put in a number.

The issue is, when there's currently a number that uses 988 as part of that seven-digit code. In order to deal with that issue -- because,

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for example, if you're trying to dial a phone number that starts with 988 but is followed by four digits -- you need to somehow be able to differentiate between that and if you're trying to dial in to the lifeline.

And so, the solution is to simply move to ten-digit dialing. I say simply, but it in fact can be somewhat complicated. It takes time, resources, and in recognition of that fact, again, we found that the two-year time frame that we adopted was the earliest technically-feasible date that we could set.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay, any other questions? This is Steve again. Okay, so we're still pretty much on time, so this is good. We have one more panel we want to get through here.

It's on Promoting Twenty-First Century Technologies and Services. And for this we have two speakers. One topic is Spectrum and Infrastructure Policies to Accelerate Access to Spectrum and 5G Deployment. So, this is Susan Mort will be addressing us. She's the Legal and Policy

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Advisor through the Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. Susan? Susan, can you turn your mic on, please?

MS. MORT: How's that? Is that better, Steve?

CHAIR POCIASK: Perfect. Thank you.

MS. MORT: Okay. And apologies. My camera also seems to be a bit out of whack. And also, let me apologize in advance before I get started. There's construction going on in my apartment building and they've been using a jackhammer. They seem to be on break, but it could start off. So, I'm sorry if you have any difficulties hearing me during the presentation.

Again, my name is Susan Mort. I'm a Legal and Policy Advisor in the Wireless Bureau here at the FCC. And I'm pleased to be here today to talk to you about what the Commission is doing to spur 5G deployment in the US.

On the first slide -- perfect, thank you so much. So, I want to start out by talking about what are the impacts of 5G. And it's not

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just, as you'll see from the image on the screen, towers with small cell transmitters.

There's a real potential beneficial impact for our economy at large. Different studies estimate that there will be three million new jobs, 275 billion in private investments -- I'm sorry, I'm having difficulty seeing this whole screen -- and billions in new economic growth in the United States.

Connection feeds are anticipated to be over 10 gigabytes per second, which is 100 times faster than 4G. Lag times are anticipated to be one-tenth of what they are today, so that'll be moving from 50 milliseconds to one millisecond.

5G will also enable smart TVs and smart transportation networks that reduce traffic, prevent accidents, and limit pollution. It'll also make possible wireless healthcare and remote surgeries, precision agriculture, industry automation, and of course any number of new innovations that are yet to be imagined.

So, on the next slide, I wanted to talk

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a bit about the 5G Fast Plan, which is Chairman Pai's initiative to accelerate, just like the speedometer that you see pushing forward towards 5G deployment. That is the market-based US approach that the FCC has undertaken to promote 5G innovation, investments, and deployment. There's three key components, the first being pushing more spectrum into the marketplace; the second, updating infrastructure policy; the third, modernizing outdated regulations.

And through all of these different prongs, we've taken different steps over the last couple of years. And as a result, the rollout of 5G systems is underway nationwide.

Looking onto the next slide, you'll see that we have a chart here which identifies different FCC spectrum actions that have been undertaken in recent years for 5G use. And these go across some high-band, some mid-band, low-band, and also in the unlicensed space.

Now, high-band spectrum basically travels short distances at high capacity with fast

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speed. Low-bands travel longer distances with less bandwidth. Mid-band, unsurprisingly, sits somewhere in the middle. But we're implementing different actions throughout all these different spectrum ranges, as well as in the unlicensed space, to make sure that there's a variety of different applications and utilities available, so that having spectrum in these different areas will enable different uses.

Let me first talk about the high-band range, where there had been a number of different auctions in recent years. Particularly, in the 28 GHz band, that auction was completed in January 2019. The 24 GHz band, which was completed in May 2019, and most recently in March of this past year, we had the largest auction in US history, releasing 3,400 MHz of spectrum into the commercial marketplace, across the 37 GHz, 39 GHz and 47 GHz bands.

In addition to these high-band efforts, in the last couple of years we've also undertaken a number of different mid-band initiatives. And

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I'm actually personally working on a couple of these. So, I'd like to talk in a little more detail about some of those.

Specifically, in the 2.5 GHz bands, this is a band where the service formerly known as the Educational Broadband Service, because of certain eligibility and use restrictions, historically have not been fully utilized, particularly in the western portion of the United States. So, in re-imagining and modernizing this band for future uses, the Commission did three things.

First, the eligibility and use restrictions were eliminated, both for existing licensees and for new licensees going forward, to make a more flexible use of. Second, the Commission opened a Rural Tribal Priority Window.

And what this window did, it ran from February of this year until early this month, until September 2nd.

And it afforded an opportunity for southerly-recognized tribes to apply for licenses

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at no cost, in terms of no application fees, no need to go through an auction, and simply apply for licenses for any unsigned 2.5 GHz spectrum within the former EBS Service that was opened over their rural, tribal plans.

The last prong of this re-imagining of this band involves a commercial auction of any unassigned spectrum that remained when existing licensees, as well as successful tribal licensees, are taken into account.

We're particularly pleased with the Rural Tribal Window, because we had over 400 applicants. And earlier this month we were able to put 157 of those applications already out as accepted for filing. And so, our goal in part, as part of this re-imagining of this band, is to afford opportunities to, as these other-than-traditional carriers, to gain access to spectrum, and particularly to bridge the digital divide in Rural Tribal area.

In a similar but different way, our approach in other bands, such as 3.45 to

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3.55 GHz -- 3.5 GHz and 3.7 to 4.0 GHz -- has also taken different approaches. In the 3.5 GHz bands, what has been done is that there is a multi-tiered sharing system, where there will be an incumbent users. Earlier, in the year there was an auction for priority licenses.

But there's also a significant portion, almost half of that band, that's being reserved for general authorized access. And what that means is you wouldn't need a formal license -- we call it license by rule -- but basically, anyone who is using compliant equipment and signs up with one of the FCC-authorized spectrum access systems, and follows the compliance rules of the band, is able to use that spectrum.

There's not the same level of interference protection as with the other license services, but it does provide an easy and kind of low-barrier entry for folks to gain access to spectrum. So, these are just examples of some of the new approaches that we're taking to make sure that spectrum is available for 5G, particularly

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in the mid-band, because that is prime spectrum for 5G applications.

I'll mention just quickly in the low-band range, that we're making targeted changes, or have made targeted changes, in the 600 MHz, 800 MHz, and 900 MHz bands, to improve use of low-band spectrum for 5G. And across all the different spectrum ranges, we're looking at opportunities for unlicensed use of spectrum that would enable, for example, wifi, in the six GHz, 61 to 71 GHz, and above 95 GHz, bands. We're also taking a fresh and comprehensive look at the 5.9 GHz bands that have been reserved for use by dedicated short-range communication.

Moving onto the next slide, I'd like to talk a bit about infrastructure siting and review. We have an image of the tower transmitting to different buildings in an urban environment.

And one of our primary goals is to make sure that there are facilities available for 5G services, and that they're able to be quickly deployed. So, we've taken a couple of different approaches to

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facilitating the review of these infrastructure projects.

At the federal level, the FCC has modernized federal historic preservations and environmental reviews of wireless deployment. At the state and local level, the Commission has removed regulatory barriers, such as unreasonable application fees, and we also instituted two new shot clocks for small wireless facility.

On the next slide, I would like to just talk for a minute about one specific topic in the infrastructures here, that is the Section 6409 proceeding. Section 6409A of the Spectrum Act streamlines state and local government review of certain requests to modify transmission equipment on existing structures.

In June of this year, the Commission adopted a declaratory ruling clarifying that when the 60-day shot clocks for local review begins, and how certain aspects of proposed modification might impact the eligibility for streamlined review under the rules. The FCC adopted a Notice

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of Proposed Rulemaking seeking comment on proposed rule changes regarding excavation and deployment outside the boundaries of an existing tower site, and the effects of such activity on eligibility for streamlined review.

Separate from clarifying the rules on streamlined local review, the declaratory ruling clarified a portion of the FCC's rules on environmental and historic preservation review that differed from most other federal agencies.

And again, the hope of this is to make sure that infrastructure deployments are able to move forward quickly, so that we can get 5G services off. And as you'll see on the screen, there's a number of creative ways that are being employed, including using palm trees as de facto towers for small cell transmitters.

On the next slide, I wanted to finish by talking about the last prong of the 5G Fast Plan, which is modernizing outdated regulations. Now, some of these may not necessarily jump out as having a direct connection to wireless deployment, but

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all modern communications networks ultimately have different components. And wireless networks need to connect to that call and to the Internet backbone, to provide connectivity. So, ultimately, all of these different efforts do contribute to 5G and wireless deployment.

So, in the one-touch, make-ready space, the FCC has updated its rules governing the attachment of new network equipment to utility poles in order to reduce cost and speed up 5G back haul deployment.

In terms of speeding the IP transition, the FCC revised its rules to make it easier for companies to invest in next-generation networks and services, instead of the fading networks of the past, and from a business data perspective, enter into incentivized investment in modern cybernetworks. The FCC updated its rules for high-speed, dedicated services, by listing rate regulations where appropriate.

And that, relating to our last slide, is the end of my formal presentation. It's

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certainly the Commission's hope that as we move forward with different policies that will enable connected cities and rural communities across the country, and we hope to continue the US's leadership in 5G deployment. So, thank you. And I would be happy to answer any questions after Audra finishes her presentation. Thank you very much.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you, Susan. This is Steve again. So, for our final speaker today, we're going to deal with the issue of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund and the 5G Fund for Rural America. Our speaker is Audra Hale-Maddox.

She's the Chief of Staff for the Rural Broadband Auctions Task Force, OEA, the Office of Economics and Analytics. So, Audra, please take it away.

MS. HALE-MADDOX: All right, my video is turned off by the admin. There we go.

Hello, everyone. So we can go to the first slide. So what I'm going to talk about today is the expansion by the FCC of 5G services, high quality internet connections into rural areas via what we call the Universal Service Fund. So

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everybody sees Universal Service Fund charges on your phone bills, on your cell phone bills. It's just a few cents per line per month and all of those funds are combined into sort of the same pot. And what the FCC did with USF funds for a very long time after they started collecting them was that they used those funds to support running individual phone lines to individual homes.

And so in 2011, the FCC did a major overhaul of their USF program in determining that USF funding could be used to support extending not just voice, but broadband services. And so since that point, since the transformation order was issued in 2011, the FCC has been working on using Universal Service Funds to support the expansion of both fixed broadband, individual lines to homes, and mobile broadband in rural areas, areas that either are difficult to serve for geographic reasons, or areas that are difficult to serve for economic reasons.

And the mechanism that we've been using to do that extension of service has been

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competitive bidding to distribute that support in the most efficient way.

Can we go to the next slide?

So the competitive bidding that we've been using, everybody is familiar with the concept of an auction where you sell something for the highest price that you can collect, but what the FCC has been using to disperse funding for broadband services are what's called reverse auctions where essentially we ask providers to tell us for specific geographic regions that have been predefined before the auction what is sort of the lowest support amount that they can use to serve that specific block or that specific geographic area to the performance standards that we're requiring for that particular auction. And so reverse auction helps us to compare bids in different areas throughout the country to serve the broadest area possible with the most efficient use of the funding that we have.

And so the first reverse auctions that were used to distribute USF funds were in 2012 the

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Mobility Fund 1 and then in 2014, the Tribal Mobility Fund 1. And so those programs were sort of jump starts to sort of get us off and running in the process of using reverse auctions to distribute USF funds for specifically broadband purposes. And so that was one time funding for one time new construction projects, not ongoing funding for service provision over an extended period of time.

Next slide.

So we've moved into Wireline reverse auctions as well so in 2014 we started with the Connect America Fund. And the Connect America Fund cost model auction did some studies and estimated costs of providing services to specific locations within specific hard to serve census blocks. And blocks that were above a specified benchmark average cost were eligible for the cost model program.

And then in 2015, they offered that model-based support to price cap carriers. So that is carriers that had been receiving legacy

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support were offered specific amounts per area based on what FCC economists had determined was a reasonable model basis of support for a particular area. And so nine carriers accepted over \$1.5 billion a year to serve 3.6 million homes and businesses in the specific areas that had been allotted for that auction by the end of 2020 in 45 different states and in one territory. And so by the end of this year, we'll be getting reporting on the last served locations within that extension of service.

Next slide.

And then we have in process rural broadband auctions. Phase two of the Connect America Fund was just completed within the last year and we're still in the process of authorizing the last funding that had been won in that auction.

And that auction is distributing about \$1.5 billion over 10 years for fixed broadband and voice services to specific locations.

And then the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is just getting going right now. We have just

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as of the 23rd of September closed the window for entities seeking to participate in the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction to get their applications completed so that they can be approved to participate. And that auction is extending up to \$16 billion of funding in an auction that starts on October 29th of this year. And any funds that aren't expended during phase one of that auction will then be up for grabs in phase two of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction which will include a fresh \$4.4 billion of funding and then any funds that remain from phase one.

And you may ask why would there be funds remaining and that's because when we're doing an auction, we have to get as close to the total funding as we can without going over. And so if there aren't sort of bids that can fill that gap exactly to the dollar line, all the funds that are included in that auction, then we might have to go slightly under the total that had been allotted in order to award the funds.

And also, entities that bid and have

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winning bids in our auctions sometimes determine in the post-auction process that either they didn't do their research properly and they can't serve the area that they had a winning bid in or their business needs change. They get an offer they can't refuse to sell their business. And so there are many different reasons why entities may default on winning bids in one of the FCC's auctions either before they ever get started on a project or at some point while they're building that project out. So any funds that are left over from phase one, we've gone ahead and set up, they will just wash into phase two.

And then we've proposed the 5G Fund for Rural America. And so the Commission is using that program to look at extending wireless mobile broadband funding into rural America for 5G. And so that fund has been proposed. It hasn't been adopted, but it has been proposed to extend up to \$9 billion for 5G service with up to \$1 billion in a second round to facilitate precision agriculture in specific regions of the country.

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Next slide.

And so the 5G Fund is a little bit different than what we've done in some of our other USF auctions because most of the time when we are using USF funds to push out service and technology, we are sort of gap filling for areas that haven't already been served because there's a commercial case to serve there.

And so with 5G, because this technology is so new anywhere, there are lots of urban areas where there's plenty economic case to serve, but just the technology isn't there yet. All the build out that the previous speaker was talking about sort of clearing the way to get the infrastructure set up and to make it possible for that service to be extended hasn't happened even in areas where it's perfectly commercially viable to run that service.

And so the Commission has really committed to making sure that rural America doesn't get left behind while urban America extends to 5G that supports extremely quick video, real-time

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telehealth, students and businesses operating in real time with less latency and greater sustain for their programs.

We don't want to sort of wait until 5G has been rolled out to everywhere that's commercially viable and then come and fill those holes with a USF program. We're trying to be aggressive in getting ahead of the market and looking at the most difficult to serve areas and getting 5G to those areas with USF funding.

So next slide.

And so when we're looking at how do we fund mobile wireless 5G and make sure that we're only sending that funding to areas that really need it, when areas that don't need it also don't have that service yet. And so we're looking at determining eligibility by the degree of how rural an area is versus eligibility by coverage. And since we can't use 5G coverage to determine what would be eligible, we ask for comment from the public and from providers on the possibility of using other coverage as proxies for areas that

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might be easily served with 5G without needing USF funding.

So for example, if an area already has unsubsidized 4G LTE would we say that the existence of that service not subsidized means that's an area that can be served commercially and doesn't need USF funding. And so we're weighing different ways to determine eligibility to make sure that this funding is distributed in the most efficient way.

And then we're also weighing and have asked for public comment on an adjustment factor to sort of put a weight on the scale in the auction to preference either very difficult terrain or particularly economically difficult to serve rural areas.

There are rural areas that are say very sparsely populated, but the population that is there is very wealthy, you know, extremely large ranches or ski resorts or that sort of high producing economic value areas. And so just looking at degree of population without looking at the sort of relative wealth of that population

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might lead to improper incentives in what areas that we make eligible. So we're really trying to fine tune eligibility for this 5G funding.

And then sort of one of the biggies that was maybe surprising for providers that we rolled out as part of this 5G fund proposal is that way back in 2011 the Commission told legacy USF funding recipients that the Commission had the intention to impose additional public interest obligations, additional performance requirements, additional reporting requirements on legacy support recipients. And so we raised that flag in 2011, but we haven't rolled those requirements out. So in our asking for comment on the 5G fund, we've also asked for comment on rolling out a scheme of public interest obligations for legacy support recipients as well.

Thank you.

CHAIR POCIASK: Well, great. So at this time if anyone has any questions for Audra or Susan, please raise your hand to be noticed.

Oh, okay. Johnny Kampis, I just

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noticed you have a hand up. Please, go ahead.

MEMBER KAMPIS: I wanted to ask Susan what kind of metrics, do you have any kind of good metrics showing how the Chairman's plan is working and how well it's working? Thank you.

MS. MORT: If I understood your question, you're asking how we're taking a look at how effective that particular plan has been.

Well, everything is still in motion and there are, as I mentioned, different funds in terms of promoting spectrum deployment, as well as infrastructure deployment. These are rapidly changing every day, but by all accounts what we're hearing certainly from carriers on the infrastructure side as well as the successful auctions that have been conducted and other implementations that are in process on the spectrum side, it is our belief that these are all successful initiatives.

In terms of actually analyzing it, that is we do have different reports that we do issue every single year, looking at the state of

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broadband deployment and those factors are taken into account. But these are ultimately -- it's a very rapidly changing environment, so it's constantly changing from day to day. So it makes it a little bit hard to track other than taking those periodic snapshots.

CHAIR POCIASK: Okay. Unless there's anything else, we'll take -- we'll just take a couple of minutes for a break. Everyone can just get up and stretch and why don't we start back -- let's see, what time is it now? 1:34. Let's just start back like at 1:37. So we'll just take a few minutes and we'll start promptly, so we'll give everyone a moment just to stretch their legs. Thanks.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 1:34 p.m. and resumed at 1:37 p.m.)

CHAIR POCIASK: This being the last meeting for the tenth CAC charter, the FCC had a public notice on the intent to renew, to renew a new charter and has already solicited nominations.

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At this point, we're sort of awaiting approval.
So I have nothing to report.

In a few minutes, I'll turn it over to Scott to see if he has anything he wants to say on this. So that's kind of where I think we stand and we'll hear more if there is more there. But what I'd like to say is at this time I just want to open up the floor for a second to any of the CAC members just to see if they have anything they wish to discuss before we open up for public comment.

Again, as before, just raise your hand and here, let me turn my video off.

Irene, I see you have your hand up.
Please comment.

MEMBER LEECH: Thank you. I appreciate the efforts related to trying to get broadband to rural areas. I still have a lot of concern about whether the incentives are there to really get done what is needed and I put some comments in the chat. You didn't see my hand for the previous panel. But anyway, I still think we

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have a lot of work to do and until we do, these areas are going to really have trouble being self sufficient economically and certainly what we've been learning in COVID has just multiplied and reinforced where things are.

And I had an experience earlier this week where my -- somebody decided that I could move to using Word and all of those things in cloud, but I can't get enough internet at home that I can afford that I can use that. In fact, I have to turn all of the automatic things off and through COVID I've been driving to work just so I could get access to the internet.

And if I could tell you the things that my students and some living in towns and in urban areas, our system really still needs a lot of work.

In fact, just yesterday, I had students who were within the town of Blacksburg whose internet wouldn't give them what they needed. And they weren't able to participate in class and were struggling with the technology.

So the real-life situation is that

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there's some wonderful things out there, but a lot of people in a lot of places and many of them are not so terribly rural and you wouldn't necessarily assume, yet you'd think they'd be covered and they're not. And so we've really got a long way to go, but anybody who needs to give a shot of what needs to be done, I'd be glad to post you here in Southwestern Virginia or Central Virginia where the family farm is to show you what we're really dealing with. Thank you.

CHAIR POCIASK: Thank you, Irene. Mark Defalco, I noticed you had a hand up.

MEMBER DEFALCO: Hi. Mark Defalco of the Appalachian Regional Commission. I just want to echo kind of what Irene is saying there. We run into this exact same issue throughout our entire region where folks don't have the connectivity. But I think another side of this is the FCC has been doing a good job of trying to through their various subsidy mechanism, the CAF and now the RDOG in trying to expand the connectivity into these rural areas, but you know,

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I think the bandwidth that we're putting out there might not be enough because what we're starting to hear is that because of COVID and because of work at home and because of virtual learning with kids, the uplink speeds or the upstream is very important because people are having to get onto their virtual private networks at work and you know, Zoom meetings and Blackboard and all the other things that need to be done. And the upload speeds that are coming out of the current subsidy programs are really not sufficient.

And we kind of have this process of funding a network like 10.1 and then going back and funding it again at 25.3 and now finding that 3 upload is not going to cut it, so we're going back and doing everything again and again and again. And I don't have an answer to that. The answer takes more money to do it right. But I mean I just think we need to look at what we're doing and finding is it really working for rural America because they clearly are still being left behind.

Thank you.

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CHAIR POCIASK: Well, thank you both for those comments. So this is Steve back again.

So at this moment, I think what I'd like to do is just see if we have any comments from the public.

Catherine, is someone monitoring that?

MR. MARSHALL: Yes, Catherine is. This is Scott with the Commission. Catherine has been monitoring that. I checked with her a few minutes ago and we did not have any questions at that time and I'm sure she'll interrupt us if that changes.

You know, Steve, congratulations on almost the conclusion of another successful CAC meeting and you and I are the two guys now that are in the way of adjournment. Do you realize that?

CHAIR POCIASK: Yes.

(Laughter.)

I have to say though, you know, I think by and large as this meeting winds down, we realize that we've completed our work, but we really -- I really want to recognize all the CAC members and

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all --

MR. MARSHALL: I do, too. Go ahead.
You first.

CHAIR POCIASK: And really all the hard work they did this year, a lot of very short deadlines and several key recommendations. I'm really profoundly grateful to all of you.

Debra Berlyn, I just want to say thanks so much for your guidance and experience and support. I really appreciate your help.

And Scott, before I turn this over to you, I just wanted to take a moment just to thank you for all your hard work and your tremendous support that you've provided me over the years, to you, and Greg, and David and Catherine and Patrick and all the FCC staff for making this possible, not to mention the technical help that we had in just getting everything put together here for I think a successful tenth charter.

So at this point, Scott, let me turn it over for some closing remarks.

MR. MARSHALL: Sure, Steve. Thank you

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very much and thank you for your kind words. And I could not echo them any louder. You've heard a lot of thank yous here today and there are an awful lot of people that are involved in putting these many parts together that makes a successful Consumer Advisory Committee.

And you know, the committee has been around since March of 2001. I was privileged to be around here at that time when this whole idea started. We didn't have a DAC then. We had a Disability Advisory Committee for many years, until the CVAA came into existence and likely so there was so much work we had to split off into another committee to be able to handle it all on the disability side. But have been very glad to have our members with disabilities here with us, too, because folks with disabilities are consumers, too.

I'm always amazed at how much time you put into this process and I'm also amazed at the conversations that take place at the working group level where people with different points of view

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will hash a topic out and sometimes agree, sometimes not agree, but I think we've been pretty successful at coming up with some recommendations that both sides can subscribe to and thus, those are the recommendations that ultimately get considered by this full committee and then passed on to the Commission.

So I think, yes, we are an advisory committee, but the one, big collateral advantage is that conversation that happened about these incredibly difficult, complicated topics that the Commission handles. And I'm always amazed, too, at these meetings about my colleagues from CPB and from the CGB and other bureaus, too, who share their expertise with us, with you, so that recommendations from this committee can be all the better informed with information.

And you combine that with the expertise around the table we've had over the years. It's pretty awesome. and I want to thank you for all of that. I also want to acknowledge the CAC team that I work with the closest, too. I couldn't do

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it without you, Catherine and Greg and others and the senior management in CPB, David and Mark and of course, Patrick and of course, our many friends who are in senior positions at the FCC all over the Agency, former CAC people. You know who I'm talking about, people like Ed Bartholomew, Diane Burstein, and others who have been CAC members and leaders in their own right during these past 20 years.

And of course, I want to recognize the folks behind the scene, the best in class interpreting group that we have under the leadership of Gerard; our friends who run our CMR and our audio-visual operations so well, Jeff and his crew; and Ben Thompson with our IT Department who helps with a lot of our training needs and such.

It all kind of works together at the end of the day.

A couple of last thoughts on my part and then we'll take any questions you might have and then I guess we can adjourn. As you know, we had a public solicitation for the eleventh term

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of this committee this past summer. And those applications are being reviewed and I expect that an announcement will be made hopefully soon about members for the new CAC starting in October.

We also at the same time had to get our charter renewed. Federal Advisory Committees run on a two-year cycle as you know, and we have to get the charter reviewed by the General Services Administration that oversees the 10,000 plus advisory committees across government and they're looking at our charter now and we expect that we'll have that approval shortly as well and we'll be able to announce the eleventh term of the committee starting in October.

So I don't know, Steve, any other questions or any hands up that -- you know, anybody wants to ask us a question or any other concerns at this point in time?

CHAIR POCIASK: Well, I mean certainly again, I just wanted to say, Scott, Greg, Catherine, everyone on the team, thank you so much for helping with this. It went so smoothly this

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year, so let's see, I have one last question I guess I should ask then.

MR. MARSHALL: Sure you should, go ahead.

CHAIR POCIASK: Is there any business?

MR. MARSHALL: Yes, any new business?

CHAIR POCIASK: Is there any new business? Okay, well, hearing and seeing none, the Consumer Advisory Committee is adjourned and with that thanks to everyone, fair well and take care.

MR. MARSHALL: Take care, everybody.
Thank you very much.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went off the record at 1:53 p.m.)