

Racial Justice, Civil Liberties and Digital Rights Groups Urge FCC Not to Harm Lifeline Program

May 19, 2017 WASHINGTON — On Thursday, 22 racial justice, civil liberties and digital rights groups signed on to the following statement:

“Today the FCC voted 2--1 to initiate a notice of proposed rulemaking pertaining to its Net Neutrality rules. We are concerned about the possible impact of this rulemaking on the Lifeline program’s support for broadband service. We care deeply about the Lifeline broadband program because it mitigates the affordability barrier to broadband services in our homes — which is particularly acute for low-income people and people of color — and because broadband access removes barriers to educational, emergency, and civil services and job opportunities. We strongly support the FCC’s recent Lifeline modernization order, which added stand-alone broadband internet service to Lifeline. We urge the Commission to ensure that nothing in this rulemaking will harm, impair, or weaken the ability of the Lifeline program to help low-income families to afford broadband service so that they can take part in the modern economy. We also urge the Commission to avoid any shift in Lifeline resources or policy that distracts from the program’s core goal of defraying the cost of communications services.”

The organizations that signed the statement are the Asian Americans Advancing Justice ,Benton Foundation, Center for Accessible Technology, Center for Media Justice, Center for Rural Strategies, Common Sense Kids Action, Communications Workers of America, Free Press, Media Mobilizing Project, NAACP, National Consumer Law Center (on behalf of its low-income clients), National Digital Inclusion Alliance, National Hispanic Media Coalition, New America’s Open Technology Institute, OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates, Open MIC (Open Media and Information Companies Initiative), OpenMedia, Public Knowledge, Public Utility Law Project of New York, The Greenlining Institute, TURN-The Utility Reform Network, and United Church of Christ, OC Inc.