

FRANK PALLONE, JR., NEW JERSEY
CHAIRMAN

CATHY McMORRIS RODGERS, WASHINGTON
RANKING MEMBER

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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May 24, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael F. Doyle
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Chairmen Pallone and Doyle:

We write to request that you hold a hearing to review the ongoing activities and programs of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

As you are aware, the FCC is responsible for implementing the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program and the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF), and the Broadband DATA Act (P.L. 116-130) to produce accurate broadband maps, which are vital to expanding Internet access in unserved areas in the United States.

Together, the EBB and ECF programs total over \$10 billion dollars and without proper implementation and oversight, these programs could be subject to waste, fraud, and abuse. At a time when the FCC is implementing these important, unprecedented programs, the Commission still is without a permanent Chair and short-handed with only four commissioners. Now that rules have been adopted for both programs, the Committee should invite the FCC to testify publicly about their plans to implement these programs. Oversight of these programs should be a bipartisan priority, given our mutual desire to see them implemented successfully.¹

Additionally, we have significant concerns with the lack of the acting-Chair's commitment to free speech.

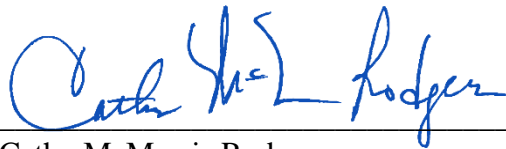
¹ See, Letters to Companies and Associations regarding Emergency Broadband Benefit Program, Mar. 24, 2021. Letters are available at: <https://republicans-energycommerce.house.gov/news/letter/bipartisan-ec-leaders-call-on-internet-providers-to-raise-awareness-of-emergency-broadband-benefit/>

In February, senior Energy and Commerce Democratic members pressured major multichannel video programming distributors (MVPDs) in an effort to remove conservative news programming from their channel lineups.² Unfortunately, the acting-Chair ignored Energy and Commerce Republicans' request that she denounce efforts of these Federal government officials to silence speech.³ This is unacceptable.

Protecting free speech is a core responsibility of the FCC, and the Commission is prohibited from preventing the broadcast of any point of view. It is time for the acting-Chair and the Commission to come to the Committee and take a stand against efforts to silence speech, even when we disagree with it.

We request that you promptly schedule an FCC oversight hearing to review these and other issues within the FCC's jurisdiction.

Sincerely,



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Republican Leader
Committee on Energy and Commerce



Bob Latta
Republican Leader
Subcommittee on Communications and
Technology

² See, Letter from Rep. Eshoo and Rep. McNerney to AT&T, Verizon, Roku, Amazon, Apple, Comcast, Charter, Dish, Cox, Altice, Alphabet, and Hulu, February 22, 2021. Available at:

<https://eshoo.house.gov/sites/eshoo.house.gov/files/Eshoo-McNerney-TV-Misinfo%20Letters-2.22.21.pdf>

³ See, Letter from Reps. McMorris Rodgers, Latta, Guthrie, Bilirakis, Johnson, Long, Mullin, Hudson, Walberg, Carter, Duncan, Curtis, and Lesko to Acting FCC Chair Rosenworcel, February 24, 2021. Available at:

<https://republicans-energycommerce.house.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/02.24.21-Letter-to-FCC-Acting-Chairwoman-Rosenworcel.pdf>