

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Affordable Connectivity Program*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Third Report and Order (August 5, 2022).

Jersey City is the second-largest city in the Garden State. A little over twenty square miles, it is bordered by the Hudson River and has long served as a transportation and manufacturing center for nearby New York City. Public housing in Jersey City serves over 15,000 people. That's a lot. The Jersey City Housing Authority is led by Vivian Brady-Phillips. She's got a big job and energy to spare. She put it to use during the pandemic to help Jersey City get residents connected. As she told us, before the COVID era began, only one-third of those living in public housing had broadband at home. So she worked with local carriers to find new ways to reach those residents and worked to promote first the Emergency Broadband Benefit and then later the Affordable Connectivity Program. She even hired a digital inclusion coordinator to work with residents on a one-to-one basis to help them navigate enrollment.

Vivian is on to something. This is what it takes to connect a community. This is what helps households at risk of falling on the wrong side of the digital divide. So let's take her approach and develop it at national scale. Because by statute, everyone receiving federal housing assistance is eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program. But we know that so many of those households are still unserved. That's why today we are creating a special pilot program to develop creative ways to reach this population, like in Jersey City. We are committing \$10 million to this effort because we know there are millions of households residing in these communities that could benefit from the Affordable Connectivity Program.

This pilot program, which we are calling "Your Home, Your Internet" would not be happening today without the leadership of Commissioner Starks. He saw clearly that this was an underserved population that was called out in the law and that needed special focus. So let me call out Commissioner Starks right here and now. I am grateful for his efforts, both for what he did to help get this program going and for what he will do going forward to ensure it is a success. In fact, I am even more excited for the good things that will come from it and his continued leadership in this area. So a big thank you to my colleague and friend.

Thank you also to our partners in this effort at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is just the start. We are looking at ways to work together more closely and already it has yielded results, including improvements to the application process and expanded access to verifier systems to help facilitate enrollment. But stay tuned for more.

Finally, I want to thank the hardworking staff of this agency for their work on this pilot program, including Allison Baker, Cheryl Callahan, Jessica Campbell, Joel Graham, Jodie Griffin, Trent Harkrader, Diane Holland, Jamile Kadre, Sherry Ross, Zachary Ross, Hayley Steffen, Kesha Woodward, and Eric Wu from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Ed Bartholme, Zac Champ, Keyla Hernandez-Ulloa, Miriam Montgomery, Mika Savir, and Joy Sears from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Mark Azic, Joanna Fister, Eugene Kiselev, John Pedersen, and Maciej Wachala from the Office of Economics and Analytics; Susan Aaron, Larry Atlas, Malena Barzilai, William Dever, Andrea Kearney, Andrea Kelly, Rick Mallen, Brendan McTaggart, Linda Oliver, Bill Richardson, Jeffrey Steinberg, Elliot Tarloff, and Chin Yoo from the Office of General Counsel; and Cara Grayer, Maura McGowan, and Joy Ragsdale from the Office of Communications Business Opportunities.