How the FCC Is Fostering Prosperity and Championing Consumer Rights

The Federal Communications Commission has led a variety of initiatives designed to facilitate innovation, drive economic prosperity, and ensure that our communications networks work for all Americans. These principles are strongly exemplified in three hallmarks of the agency’s recent policy agenda: the reinstatement of the net neutrality rules and Title II authority over broadband; the promulgation of the digital discrimination rules; and the administration of the Affordable Connectivity Program. Taken together, these initiatives reflect the core objectives of the Commission’s work: universal access, consumer protection, open markets, and public safety. These initiatives advance consumers’ interests and rights in the following ways:

1. **Establishing Legal Authority for Consumer Protections**: Reclassifying broadband under Title II establishes a strong legal basis for broadband oversight. Title II classification over broadband grants the FCC authority to create and enforce rules that promote universal connectivity; network resiliency; competition; national security; and protect user privacy. Meanwhile, the reinstated net neutrality rules prohibit carriers from engaging in the kinds of practices that significantly degrade user experience, including blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization.

2. **Guarding Against Discriminatory Corporate Conduct**: With its recently adopted digital discrimination rules, the FCC has followed Congress’ bipartisan directive to prevent broadband providers and other covered entities from discriminating on the basis of income level, race, ethnicity, color, or national origin. The Commission has also taken steps to empower consumers to challenge policies and practices that intentionally or differentially impact covered populations – a key step towards closing the digital divide. These rules are a victory for consumers and a critical accountability mechanism to ensure that broadband is enjoyed by all communities across urban, rural, and Tribal America.

3. **Ensuring That Broadband Is Accessible and Affordable to All**: In directing the implementation, community outreach, and eligibility criteria for affordability programs such as the Affordable Connectivity Program, the FCC ensures that every person can share in the benefits of our increasingly digital world. As of today, the agency has enrolled 23 million subscribers – or 1 in 6 Americans – in the ACP. Affordable connectivity doesn’t just benefit these enrollees; it also benefits the entire ecosystem of online businesses, employers, educators, and medical professionals.

The FCC needs each of these tools at its disposal to ensure that every user benefits from industry innovation. In asserting legal authority for consumer protections, preventing discriminatory corporate conduct, and ensuring broadband affordability, the FCC ensures that all Americans can access the opportunities for economic growth that come with digital inclusion.