

**STATEMENT OF  
MEREDITH ATTWELL BAKER  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRANSPORTATION AND SCIENCE  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
JULY 15, 2009**

Good afternoon. Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Hutchison and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. It is a tremendous honor to have been nominated by President Obama to serve as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), and I am deeply grateful for this opportunity. I look forward to answering your questions and to earning your support for my nomination.

I would like to start by introducing my husband, Jamie Baker. Everyday I am thankful for the foundation of love and support he provides. I am also pleased to be able to introduce my parents, Kirby and Nancy Attwell, who are here from Houston. As a successful businessman, my father has shown me the importance of hard work, determination and common sense. My mother, who worked as a fundraiser for public television and as a homemaker, has shown me how to live a life full of creativity, kindness and zest. I have two of my four stepdaughters here – Hallie and Mary Stuart. Jackie is at sleep away camp and Rosemary is in New York. And my brother Kirby is here from Houston.

I am also pleased to be sitting next to Mignon Clyburn. It has been a privilege to get to know such a talented and dedicated public official. If confirmed, I look

forward to serving with Commissioner Clyburn and the current FCC Commissioners—Chairman Julius Genachowski, Commissioner Michael Copps, and Commissioner Robert McDowell.

Chairman Genachowski, who is off to a great start at the FCC, gave an inspirational introductory speech to the FCC staff on the day of his arrival. He stated that the promise of technology has never been brighter and consequently, the obligations of the Commission have never been greater. I share that view. The FCC holds the keys to unleashing the power of broadband, the new media landscape and true public safety interoperability. That responsibility is challenging but the rewards will truly make a difference in the life and future of every American.

According to one metric, the communications industry constitutes one-sixth of our economy, and serves as a foundation for the rest. A 21<sup>st</sup> century communications infrastructure is essential for restoring sustained economic growth, opportunity and prosperity. Congress has directed the FCC to develop and implement a National Broadband Plan. This directive holds great promise for our nation. Not only do many aspects of our children's education and opportunities for life long learning depend on this directive, but so to does the next generation of health care delivery, smart energy grid development, and public safety interoperability. The FCC will play an important role in making sure that the right regulatory environment exists to incent companies to build out infrastructure faster, to reward innovation and investment, and to encourage competition so that

American consumers have access to, and can afford, the world's most advanced telecommunications services.

I believe we can reap great benefits from a spectrum policy that unlocks the value of the public airwaves in more efficient, transparent and flexible ways. The Spectrum Inventory bill that this Committee marked up last week, shows important leadership and is a first step to increasing wireless broadband use in innovative ways such as secondary markets, leasing, and testbeds.

Improving the effective and efficient management of federal programs such as universal service must round this National Broadband Plan. In this time of profound economic challenge, we need to ensure that the communications sector continues to thrive and contributes meaningfully to an economic recovery, both in the near and long term.

I was fortunate to work closely with many of you and your staffs in my former role at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) on the recent transition to digital television. The 700 MHz spectrum band that this transition has freed makes way for the next generation of American wireless services and public safety interoperability. I worked very hard to make the unique coupon program administered by NTIA a success in difficult circumstances. Although the transition was aided by additional time and resources for coupon distribution and call centers, I am proud of NTIA's hard work throughout the program. I also appreciate the work that Congress did to ensure the success of the transition.

In the past weeks, I have had the pleasure of meeting with many of the members of this Committee. And I thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet with me and share your thoughts on communications policy and the future of the FCC. Whether it is discussion of the Fairness Doctrine, indecency and violence in broadcast programming, low power FM, WWOR, satellites in Alaska or broadband in the Navajo Nation, I have learned a great deal about your respective views on the range of issues that affect your states and constituents. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing our dialogue, to consulting closely with this Committee and with your other colleagues in Congress, and to working effectively together for the benefit of American consumers.

The FCC has a profound impact on what the American people see, hear and read. Healthy competition can benefit consumers and, in many cases, can reduce the need for regulation. However, the regulatory mandate of the FCC will remain an important one as our society continues to experience technological advancement in the communications sector. If confirmed, I would take this responsibility very seriously while working to promote the principles of investment, innovation and competition for the benefit of all Americans. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering your questions.