

**Statement of Nathan Simington**  
**Nominee to Serve as a Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission**  
**Before the United States Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee**

**November 10, 2020**

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor and a privilege to appear before you today. I am humbled to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission, and it is an honor to have this Committee consider my nomination.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to you and your staffs. Over the past several weeks, you have given me the opportunity to meet with you and discuss issues of great concern to you and your states. Now more than ever, telecommunications are at the center of how we work, study, and carry out our lives. Thank you for sharing your insights on the Commission's role in advancing the public interest; thank you as well for discussing current challenges and possible solutions. If I am so fortunate as to be confirmed, I commit to continued close engagement with all of you in the public good.

If the Committee will indulge me a moment, I would like to recognize my family. In attendance today are my sons Adrian, who is fourteen, and Lawrence, who is eight. My beloved wife Larisa and our son George, who is three, are unable to attend. My family is the center of my life and I am greatly blessed to have their love. I would also like to thank my parents, Erroll and Ruth Simington, for their constant support and encouragement. In addition, I would like to extend my congratulations to Messrs. Huff and Autry on their nominations.

I come before this Committee at a momentous time. America is where innumerable communications technologies were born, from the transistor to the laser to the communications satellite. The first cellular phone call was placed by an American engineer on the streets of New York. American telecommunications innovation has been an enormous boon to the world.

And yet, too many Americans remain disconnected. As a boy from a farming family, when I was growing up, we had a telephone and three television channels at our farmhouse. But I had a computer in the basement too, and it was my passport to a world of technology and education that was like sheer magic. This was long before commercial internet, but I have never forgotten the experience of designing an adder circuit on a fuzzy green screen, with a copy of the 1986 World Book at my elbow to look up unfamiliar words. I value connectivity in part because this childhood experience put me on the road to appear before this august Committee today.

We have a tremendous opportunity before us, as a nation, to complete the long project of closing the digital divide. Our fellow Americans cannot, must not, be left disconnected even as the world enters the fifth generation of wireless communication. The opportunities before us will remain beyond our grasp so long as so many Americans are foreclosed, by geographical or other barriers, from reaching them.

Furthermore, for the first time, American telecommunications leadership may be in question. The persistence of the digital divide is a factor in this. If some Americans are denied access to advanced technologies, we are thereby denying ourselves the benefit of their contributions, and this lack can compound once it becomes generational. Philo Farnsworth, so the story goes, invented television image scanning while plowing a field. May this union of the homely and the cutting-edge inspire us to ensure that all of our children are able to realize their potential.

My journey has taken me from my family farm to opportunity in America. I was a top lawyer at an international wireless mobility company, and I am now fortunate to work at the executive branch's telecommunications agency, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. I believe this experience gives me a valuable perspective on the challenges and opportunities before the industry, the Commission, and the American people. With this in mind, I would like to briefly outline the view and approach that, if I am confirmed, I would bring to the Commission. I will discuss this under the umbrella of four principles.

My first principle is regulatory stability. We have all reaped great benefits from vigorous competition in telecommunications, enabled by private infrastructure investment. The Commission must always place the public interest first. And to do so, to improve consumer welfare, it must be thoughtful about potential chilling effects on development if its regulatory efforts go over the line and become intrusive, disruptive and burdensome.

By sticking to stability, competition and consumer protection, we stand the best chance of seeing continued telecommunications development and modernization. We will support innovation and entrepreneurship and promote consumer welfare. And we will modernize to continue creating good jobs and increasing productivity. If I am confirmed, I will support the Commission's ongoing commitment to light-touch regulation.

My second principle is universal connectivity. The commission's record over the past few years should be assessed by looking at two success stories: the improvement of service and the growth in connectivity. Since 2015, broadband has grown much faster and much cheaper. Since 2012, the volume of data carried over each megahertz of consumer wireless spectrum has increased by over 4,000%. And we are much closer to closing the digital divide today than we were a few short years ago. This is a record to be proud of. If I am confirmed, I will continue to uphold Congress's mandate to the Commission under Section 254 while always looking for opportunities to improve and extend connectivity. The Commission's current efforts to expand access are exciting. I would love to do my part in delivering on them.

My third principle is public safety and national security. Congress has directed the Commission to keep the spectrum commercialization pipeline full, but conflicts have arisen with public uses. Congress, the Commission, and public users can reconcile these conflicts and achieve win-win outcomes. The COVID pandemic has demonstrated the strength of America's networks under unprecedented strain; however, it has also exposed weaknesses in our ability to deliver vital services. As a senior advisor at a public agency, I understand the conflicts and challenges that we face in vindicating these vital interests. If I am confirmed, I will ensure that

public interests are protected while sorely needed spectrum commercialization continues briskly in accordance with the will of Congress.

My fourth principle is serving the public interest. All of the Commission's efforts are justified, in the end, by whether the American people are well-served by telecommunications. The Commission must prevent illegal marketing, keep 9-1-1 up to date, balance the rights of television providers, and restrain unwanted robocalls – perhaps the issue that most unifies Washington. These issues may not be as flashy as the policy debates over spectrum auctions or broadband buildouts, but for many Americans, they are where telecom's rubber meets the road. If I am confirmed, I will be a strong advocate for the Commission's public interest mandate functions, and I will commit to having an open door and top-notch responsiveness to concerns from Congress and the public.

Chairman Wicker, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, please accept my thanks once more for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.