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May 12, 2017

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 Twelfth Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 11-42, *Lifeline and Linkup Reform and Modernization*; WC Docket No. 17-108, *Restoring Internet Freedom*; WC Docket No. 16-106, *Protecting the Privacy of Customers of Broadband and Other Telecommunications Services*; WC Docket No. 13-184, *Modernizing the E-rate Program for Schools and Libraries*; WC Docket No. 12-375, *Rates for Interstate Inmate Calling Services*

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Wednesday, May 10, the Voices for Internet Freedom Coalition — made up of the Center for Media Justice, Color of Change, Free Press and the National Hispanic Media Coalition, along with 18 Million Rising and Common Cause, hosted a public forum on communications accessibility with Commissioner Clyburn and her chief of staff, J. David Grossman. The forum took place at the Los Angeles Community Action Network (LACAN) in Skid Row, 838 East 6th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90021. A full Facebook Live recording is available at <https://www.facebook.com/centerformediajustice/>.

Trudy Goodwin from LACAN welcomed the audience and shared about the organization's mission, to help people dealing with poverty create and discover opportunities, while serving as a vehicle to ensure they have voice, power and opinion in decisions that directly affect them.

Alex Nogales, president and CEO of the National Hispanic Media Coalition, stressed the importance of preserving Net Neutrality.

Steven Renderos, organizing director at the Center for Media Justice, facilitated a discussion with area residents on the importance of the internet and phone service in their lives.

- General Jeff Page, a Skid Row resident, spoke about the difficulty for those who are unhoused to charge their cell phones as well as the failure of trickle down economics to help those in need.

- Susan Price, a former Skid Row resident, discussed how critical internet access is to unhoused people. She said that it is very difficult to even find a homeless shelter without the internet, and that when she was unhoused she was only able to locate shelter by using the internet at the library.
- Marco Castro Bohorquez, a health and wellness activist who is currently unhoused, discussed how the internet has helped him access remote health services. But for the internet, Bohorquez would have been unable to find culturally-relevant therapists in Fresno, California and Argentina to help him with his mental health challenges. Bohorquez expressed the need to protect people's online information, particularly information about their health status.
- Britney Galindo, a Los Angeles area high school student, discussed the difficulty of staying connected to her father, who is incarcerated, due to the high cost of prison phone calls. She shared that she is only able to speak to him fifteen minutes per month, and that this lack of connectivity has caused her great pain. Britney also discussed that it is critical for her to have internet access to complete school assignments.
- Melissa Baranic, a fifth-grade teacher who served for fourteen years in a high poverty school district, said that many students do not have broadband at home, which has placed them at an educational disadvantage. She explained that she has made the "heartbreaking" decision to assign homework that she knows that many of her students cannot complete without home internet, because state educational standards demand it and she doesn't want to hold back the small number of students who are connected at home. She also explained that all testing has moved online, which has greatly increased barriers for poor students to succeed. In her experience, if a student is on the school lunch problem, they probably do not have internet access at home.
- Lourdes Pablo talked about the difficulty of finding work as a caregiver since she uses her cell phone as her primary way to access the internet. She explained that the internet is the only way that she stays in touch with her son in the Phillipines.
- Takouie Daglian explained that she would be unable to afford telephone service without the Lifeline program and that having phone service is critical for her since she has had health-related issues. She says that she uses the phone to connect with health and emergency services as well as with family members.

Next Jessica J. González, deputy director and senior counsel at Free Press, facilitated a panel of organizers, artists, researchers and activists to talk about the importance of broadband and Net Neutrality.

- Hernán Galperin, a research associate professor at USC's Annenberg School for Communication, discussed his recent research on broadband choice and adoption in Los Angeles. He and his team mapped the digital divide in Los Angeles, and that tool can be viewed here: <http://usc-annenberg.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8f4cee8ba8fa478396e947cb595674f3>.
- Denise Cortes, an artist, blogger and entrepreneur who founded www.PearMama.com, explained that she has made a living with her blog and that without Net Neutrality she would not have the resources to compete and succeed. She explained that the internet has allowed her to reach other Latinas with culturally-relevant art and culture pieces that she never saw on TV and in magazines when she was growing up. She shared that her online business allows her to support her six kids while also being at home to care for them.
- Tia Oso, a national organizer with the Black Alliance for Just Immigration (BAJI), said that Net Neutrality is a racial justice issue and that the internet has enabled the group to organize for the immigration rights of Black immigrants.
- Taz Ahmed, an activist with 18 Million Rising, said the open internet has allowed her to connect with other Muslims and South Asians online to build a virtual community, to organize for justice for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and to help drive voter registration efforts. It also enabled her to create the podcast, #GoodMuslimBadMuslim, which has created space for dialogue with non-Muslims and pushed back against anti-Muslim stereotypes often seen in traditional media. She explained that the purpose of her podcast is non-commercial, and that without Net Neutrality she would not have an equal opportunity to be heard. Her podcast is available at <http://www.goodmuslimbadmuslim.com/>.
- Sylvia Moore, a Southern California organizer for California Common Cause, said that Net Neutrality is critical to fostering civic engagement and full participation in our democracy.

Brandi Collins, senior campaign director with Color of Change, next opened up an open mic period. We heard from three audience members.

- The first was a writer/poet and Skid Row resident. She lives off of \$221 a month, and relies solely on her Lifeline connection for phone and internet access. She said that wifi is hard to come by in Skid Row. She said that she wants to blog and write poetry and access mental health services online, but she does not have adequate access.
- The second expressed concerns about corporate and government surveillance on the internet.

- The third stressed the importance of public libraries and keeping them open in communities with high levels of poor and unhoused people.

We submit this ex-parte notice in accordance with Section 1.1206(b) of the Commission's rules.

Respectfully submitted,

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