

**Statement of Gigi B. Sohn**  
**Nominee to Serve as Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission**

**Before the**  
**US Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation**

**December 1, 2021**

Chairwoman Cantwell, Ranking Member Wicker, members of the Committee, I am honored to be nominated by President Biden and to be considered by this Committee for a seat on the Federal Communications Commission. It has been a privilege to meet with many of you over the past several weeks.

I am delighted to be joined by my wife, Lara Ballard, our daughter Yosselin Sohn, my mother-in-law Cindy Ballard and my brother Eric. I want to acknowledge my mother, Roma, who can't be here today, but whose love and support are the reason that I am here.

My parents raised my three brothers and me in a middle-class household on Long Island, where I was far more likely to play sports and watch my beloved Mets and Jets than talk about policy. The radio was always on in the family kitchen, where reports from the frontlines of the Vietnam War, Watergate, and other critical events of the '60s and '70s resonated. It was there that I learned the power of communications networks to inform public discourse and promote democratic values. My love of local broadcasting, and especially radio, led me to Boston University, where I studied communications law and policy.

After school and private practice, I started what has been an over 30-year career as a public interest lawyer advocating for policies that ensure that modern communications networks are available to everybody, regardless of who they are or where they live. For the past two decades, I have worked towards the goal of ensuring that every household in the US has robust and affordable broadband Internet access.

While much of my career has been spent in the nonprofit and academic sectors, I also spent three years as Counselor to then-FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler. I gained the important experience of working inside the agency, balancing the competing equities of the FCC's numerous stakeholders. It was hard work, but it was the most formative experience of my career because it helped me understand the different tools needed to be an effective policymaker.

If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed by the Senate, here are some of the values that I would bring to the FCC:

First and foremost, pragmatism. I have always been a strong advocate for the public interest, but I have also demonstrated a willingness to reach out and sit down with people who disagree with my position to try and find common ground. I have done so whether someone is from a different political party or from industry—and even when doing so has put me at odds with some in the public interest community.

Second, integrity and transparency. I am always willing to listen and respect positions different from my own. You will always know where I'm coming from, and my door will always be open. We may not ultimately agree on the policy outcome, but you won't be surprised about my position.

Third, competition. Markets work best when there is vigorous competition. It is the surest way to make certain that broadband is available, affordable, and open to a diversity of viewpoints. Federal policies that promote competition are always superior to heavy-handed behavioral or price regulation, which is why I have always supported policies that lower barriers to entry and minimize gatekeeper power.

Finally, free expression. Freedom of speech is the lifeblood of our American experience and has always been at the core of my work. I am proud that some of the most conservative television networks are supporting my confirmation because I worked with them for years to get access to cable subscribers after operators refused to carry them. I have also worked with communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community to ensure access to their voices on different platforms without interference. I have always believed that democracy works best when voices of all kinds can speak and be heard.

I've been asked why, after a long career, I would want a seat on the FCC. My answer is simple. If confirmed, I would be serving on the Commission at a critical time for our country. Thanks to the work of Congress over the past year, there are ample resources – and bipartisan support – to make enormous progress in closing the digital divide in both rural and urban areas. These resources will help deploy networks everywhere and allow for low-income households to afford and adopt broadband, which is essential to full participation in our society and our economy. It would be the honor of a lifetime to help the FCC and Congress attain that goal.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress, Members of this Committee, Chairwoman Rosenworcel, and Commissioners Carr, Starks and Simington to achieve universal connectivity in the United States. Thank you.