

Opening Statement of John Chase Johnson
Nominee to be the Inspector General of the Federal Communications Commission
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
March 11, 2020

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, it is a great honor to be the nominee to serve as the Inspector General of the Federal Communications Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

This is an extraordinary position. The cornerstone of our great democracy is the trust of the people. And inspectors general exist, above all else, to build and protect that trust.

To introduce myself briefly, I come from a family committed to the service of others. My father serves others as a doctor, my mother as a teacher, and my brother as a doctor in the Navy.

After college, I taught high school for one year before commissioning in the Marine Corps. I then attended law school at the University of Virginia and returned to active duty. On active duty, I served as a prosecutor and, while deployed to Afghanistan, an investigator. Following my transition from active duty to the reserves, I clerked for two federal judges, Judge Victor Wolski of the Court of Federal Claims, and Judge Edith Clement of the Fifth Circuit. I then entered private practice at Covington & Burling. Even during that time, my career focused on service, as I spent a quarter of my time representing indigent criminal defendants *pro bono*. I continue to serve in the Marine Corps Reserves as a military judge.

As Thomas Jefferson said, “[t]here is a debt of service due from every [person] to his country, proportioned to the bounties which nature and fortune have measured to him.” I reflect on the good fortune and opportunities I have been afforded to serve my country and my community. Serving as the Inspector General of the FCC would be a continuation of that solemn commitment, and one that I would treat with the highest integrity, diligence, and duty.

I am confident that my litigation, investigation, and leadership experiences in both the public and private sectors will equip me to serve effectively as Inspector General of the FCC. If confirmed, I promise to exercise my responsibilities with the independence I believe I have shown throughout my career: following facts to where they lead; applying the law as it is; and avoiding ideologies, politics, and ends-driven analyses.

If confirmed, I intend to:

- Ensure that the FCC Office of Inspector General (OIG) is an independent and objective organization;
- Pursue investigations and audits aggressively;
- Report the findings of these investigations and audits quickly;
- Employ OIG resources efficiently, focusing on high-risk issues;
- Collaborate with other inspectors general and the Counsel of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency;
- Protect and fight for whistleblowers;
- Defend taxpayers’ dollars from fraud, waste, and abuse;

- Maintain close relationships with Congress, including this Committee; and
- Develop effective working relationships with the FCC Commissioners, Bureaus, and Offices.

I understand that the responsibilities of the position to which I have been nominated are significant. Given the important issues facing the FCC—from ensuring the rapid deployment of secure 5G technology, to allocating spectrum in a changing technology environment, to preventing fraud in FCC programs—assuming the leadership role of Inspector General will be challenging. But, of course, as President Kennedy said, we should choose to do things “not because they are easy, but because they are hard.”

I am honored to be considered for this important position and look forward to answering your questions. Thank you.