Statement of Danielle Thumann
Nominee to Serve as Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission
Before the United States Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee

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Chairman Cruz, 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 I thank you for your consideration of that nomination. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with all of you to advance the public interest and serve the American people.

I would like to begin by introducing my family because they are the foundation of my commitment to public service. I have with me my parents, Diane and Bill, who taught me the value of hard work, the power of perseverance, and the grace of humility. They also taught me the importance of family and community as the bedrock upon which this great nation was built. Without them and their countless sacrifices, I would not be sitting here today.

I also have with me my husband, James, and two of our three children, Sofia and Alaina. Also with me is my sister, Lauren, and her husband, Sam. And watching from home are my son, Patrick, my nieces, and countless friends and family. As I think about the privilege of serving in this role, I think about my children and my nieces and the responsibility we have to leave them a country that continues to be the shining example of liberty, justice and prosperity across the world. A nation that they love and take pride in not only because it is theirs, but because it is a nation that has proven without a doubt to be deserving of that love and pride.

I began my professional journey into communications law thirteen years ago when I was a first-year law student at The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law. I joined the Communications Law Institute and graduated with both my J.D. and a certificate in communications law studies. During my law school years, I held internships in the private sector, as well as at the FCC in the Wireline Competition Bureau and in a commissioner's office, where I first learned about the heart of the agency's mission: ensuring all Americans have access to communications services.

The agency's mission resonated deeply with me as I myself am a product of rural America. I grew up in Moneta, a small town in Southwest Virginia's Bedford County. While the town started in the mid-1800s with a blacksmith shop, schoolhouse, and church, the 1900s saw the construction of the Virginia Railroad which spurred previously unprecedented growth for Moneta. Later, a lake was built in the 1960s making the town a popular destination for boaters, outdoorsmen, and vacationers. Today, much of the area is connected to high speed broadband thanks to recent funding awards, as well as the robust competition that satellite connectivity and fixed wireless have brought to the market. But it's towns like Moneta across the country that we have a continuing obligation to ensure do not get left behind.

Since 2016, I have had the privilege of working on many other issues important to the FCC's role, including protecting consumers, promoting public safety, and fostering innovation and competition in the marketplace. I first started at the Federal Communications Commission over five years ago as a Legal Advisor to then-Commissioner Carr. And I have served as his Senior Counsel on matters before the Wireline, Public Safety and Homeland Security, and Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureaus since January 2025.

In these roles, I have had the opportunity to work every day alongside the devoted and talented public servants at the Federal Communications Commission. Their combined wealth of knowledge on a broad range of technical matters in law and policy is second to none and I have greatly enjoyed learning from them.

I have also had the opportunity to hear firsthand, inside and outside of Washington, D.C., how our communications policies are shaping the lives of those living in communities across the country. From these experiences, there are three areas that are particularly important to me and to the Commission's mission that, if confirmed, I would work tirelessly to advance alongside my Commission colleagues.

First, modernizing America's communications networks is critically important to ensuring our nation's economic success and fulfilling our promise that all Americans have a fair shot at an affordable and high-speed connection. We are in the middle of a massive transition away from degrading legacy networks to an all-IP environment. This transition isn't just about data packets moving faster. A successful transition holds the potential to transform day-to-day life and is critical for ensuring that our wired and wireless networks are ready for a future powered by next-generation technologies. Communities across the country have started to recognize the economic and social value in bringing these networks to their residents and the FCC can continue to support those efforts in several ways. For one, the FCC can continue to ensure that outdated rules and regulations don't mandate the preservation of legacy networks at the expense of new, improved ones. FCC policies should facilitate, rather than hinder, increased investment in modernized networks. For another, the agency's work to put commercial spectrum in the marketplace must continue. And lastly, the FCC should continue its efforts on permitting reform to ensure timely deployment of modernized networks and efficient use of capital resources.

Second, strengthening public safety is paramount as technologies and networks continue to change and modernize. The agency was established, in part, to ensure that communications were available to all Americans for the purpose of promoting safety of life. To borrow a line from former Chairwoman Rosenworcel, no call will ever be more important than the call made to 9-1-1. The FCC has an obligation to ensure that its rules are updated in a manner that ensures Americans continue to have access to emergency services, even as technology and networks continue to evolve. As the IP transition continues and voice services become available over many different technologies, it is important that our 9-1-1 network is as robust and reliable as ever to match consumer expectations and needs. Promoting public safety is an area where Congress has demonstrated strong leadership as well, including successful efforts this year to enact two bipartisan laws that will bolster our emergency alert systems – Lulu's Law and Mystic Alerts.

Third, protecting consumers from illegal robocalls and fraud and scams must remain the agency's top consumer protection priority. The FCC has been tackling this problem in a new and different way by combatting robocalls at each point of a call's lifecycle. As part of this new approach, the FCC has kicked off numerous rulemakings that would tighten access to numbering resources, strengthen Know Your Customer and Know Your Upstream Provider rules, implement new ways to deter illegal robocalls that originate abroad, improve call blocking tools for providers, and improve the effectiveness of the Robocall Mitigation Database. The FCC has also been taking aggressive enforcement action, and working to educate consumers, especially those consumers that are particularly vulnerable, about the types of fraud and scams being carried out over phone and text. This work must continue as scammers continue to evolve and become more sophisticated.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge that in my time at the FCC, I have prioritized working with my colleagues to achieve consensus. I have approached my relationships inside the FCC and with outside stakeholders with transparency, respect, and a desire to solve problems so that we can deliver the best possible result for Americans. If confirmed, I would approach the job with the same sense of duty and commitment to approach every issue in a fair and even handed way while basing decisions based on the facts, the law, and the record.

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for holding this hearing today. It is an honor to appear before you. I look forward to answering your questions.