



## Media/Telecommunications Task Force Priorities

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### 1. Congress and the FCC should ensure affordable high-speed broadband for all people in the United States.

- Congress should provide vigorous oversight and should oppose the FCC's proposed drastic cuts to the federal Lifeline program, the only federal program assisting low-income households with the cost of broadband and telephone service.
- Oversight should also include investigation into the causes for declining Lifeline participation rates.

### 2. Congress should hold hearings on the practices and rates for inmate communications and pass the bipartisan Inmate Calling Technical Correction Act, S.2520, which will restore to the Federal Communications Commission the authority to end predatory inmate calling rates.

- Congress should provide oversight into the practices and rates for prison communications to review whether prisoners and their families are being charged just and reasonable rates and the effect of unaffordable communications on reintegration post-incarceration.

### 3. Because meaningful protection of civil rights and advancement of key policy objectives rely on an accurate, independent, and diverse media that serve civil rights constituencies, Congress should provide vigorous oversight of the FCC's failure to collect and use demographic ownership and employment data, decisions to permit additional media consolidation and rulings that reduce media ownership diversity in broadcasting.

- The FCC should collect data on ownership by women and people of color and, prior to adoption, analyze any media policy proposal for its likely impact on increasing or decreasing media ownership diversity.
- The FCC should not increase the National TV audience reach cap and should eliminate loopholes in measuring national TV audience reach.
- The FCC should reinstate collection and publication of equal employment opportunity data in the broadcasting and cable industries.

### 4. Congress should provide vigorous oversight of the administration's obligation to ensure affordable modern high-speed communications infrastructure serves all people in the U.S., including in American Indian territory, rural areas, and urban centers.

- Oversight is particularly important regarding post-disaster access to essential communication services, particularly for low-income households, communities of color, and communities with limited-English proficiency.
- Transition to IP based services requires consumer protection, notice, monitoring, and reporting.
- Low-cost access to unlicensed spectrum facilitates competition and entrepreneurship, particularly in communities with historically limited access to capital.

- 5. Just as the internet has created immense positive value by connecting people, facilitating civil rights advocacy and adding new voices to our culture and public debate, it can also enable discriminatory conduct, exacerbate existing disparities and give new tools to those who want to threaten, harass, intimidate, defame, or violently attack people different from themselves. New technologies—including algorithmic decision making, artificial intelligence and machine learning—must protect civil rights, prevent unlawful discrimination and advance equal opportunity.**
- Private, independent civil rights audits are essential to fulfill these goals.
  - Data practices legislation must, at a minimum, protect civil rights, prevent unlawful discrimination, advance equal opportunity and should ensure low-income people and people with limited-English proficiency are fully protected.
  - Companies should develop clear policies for how they will institutionalize diversity and inclusion practices in hiring. Beyond recruitment, such policies should emphasize retention practices through professional development and advancement, diversity at the executive and board levels, as well as supplier diversity efforts.
  - Companies should adopt policies that will ensure corporate accountability, transparency, consumer control, informed consent, clear, understandable terms of service that are fairly enforced. Terms of service, as well as any notifications of a breach of security over personal data, must be understood by a diverse consumer base.
  - Companies cannot reap the financial and other benefits of their platforms and their business models without taking responsibility for the harm those platforms can inflict on civil rights. Companies thus have a moral obligation to affirmatively identify and reduce hate speech and other tactics on their platforms that threaten civil rights because of bias against an individual's or group's race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity, on their platforms. This includes adequate funding, hiring and training for enforcement efforts and reliance on both internal and external expertise.