



Operation Military Family Cares

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Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Applications of T-Mobile US, Inc. and Sprint Corporation, WT Docket No. 18-197

Dear Ms. Dortch,

I am a U.S. Navy veteran and the Founder & CEO of Operation Military Family Cares, a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the health, morale, and finances of military veterans and their families.

I have attached an op-ed I wrote that was published by the Herald Net, in Everett, Washington. In the piece I detail my experience with the veteran and military support activities of T-Mobile, particularly what I encounter in Washington State.

They have proven to be a strong supporter of our military families and veterans, and for that they have my support.

I believe that their pending merger with Sprint has the potential to further benefit military families and veterans. Many veterans come from and choose to return to rural communities after service, where they struggle to find healthcare that meets their specific needs. The 5G network planned by T-Mobile and Sprint would make telehealth/telemedicine possible, which would dramatically improve the lives of these veterans.

Additionally, they plan on deploying additional LTE coverage around military bases, which would help our active duty members. This merger holds significant promise for our active and retired military members and their families, and it is my hope it will soon be cleared for approval.

Sincerely,

Michael Schindler
Founder & CEO

Op-Ed

By Michael Schindler, CEO, Operation Military Family Cares

T-Mobile has long been an important employer in Washington State, and the company's growth has been beneficial to our economy—both in state and for the nation as a whole.

As the CEO of Operation Military Family Cares, I felt it was important to provide some additional context as to what T-Mobile has done for our community as they move ahead with their efforts to merge with Sprint. Our team is devoted to programs and solutions that will improve the health, the morale, and the finances of our military/Veteran families and the industries that hire them. In doing so, we are exposed to a number of for-profit and non-profit efforts that deserve to be showcased – and this merger is worthy of such because of the positive impact it will have on our communities and our military and Veteran families.

Recently, T-Mobile has launched an initiative to help Veterans that is extensive in both its reach and its benefit. Among some of the provisions are a commitment to hire at least 10,000 Veterans and military spouses over the next five years, a plan to help active-duty personnel and Veterans save money on family phone plans called T-Mobile ONE Military, and a partnership with FourBlock to expand their career readiness program online and across 20 cities throughout the country. This means that more Veterans can access this incredible program that helps transition military members to civilian employment, which boasts a 94 percent success rate.

In addition, the merger will result in an average of 24,960 jobs each year between 2019 and 2023, including indirect job creation throughout the rest of the economy. This will provide even more opportunities for our Veterans and their families.

T-Mobile's commitment to Veterans and the military is evident in the work that they are doing, and these efforts deserve recognition. Many companies support our Veterans and military, but T-Mobile's involvement is deep.

For these reasons alone, I would be inclined to support T-Mobile's merger with Sprint. But, there's so much more that will benefit our state and country—like the potential for a fast 5G network, nationwide.

Internet speeds, particularly on mobile devices, aren't something people spend a whole lot of time thinking about—unless you're in an area that doesn't have much in the way of high-speed networks. Go from a community that regularly has 4G to a rural area and then try and use your favorite apps, and then you'll know what I'm talking about—there are many pockets across our state and country that don't have access to fast and reliable wireless service.

These are the communities that would benefit most. T-Mobile and Sprint each have different airwave holdings (called spectrum). By combining these two companies, the availability of spectrum that can be used for wireless networks is considerably expanded, allowing the combined company to reach areas that haven't seen much in the way of broadband access. Many of these rural areas are where many of our Veterans choose to call home. Through this merger and expansion of services, we'll be able to reach more rural Veterans and bring services to them, especially through telehealth.

There's even more good news for the military in this merger. T-Mobile will be investing more than \$500 million to build up LTE coverage around military bases—meaning better coverage and 5G speeds are planned for bases too.

Washington State has long been home to a vibrant tech sector, with T-Mobile as a major player in that industry. Nationally, we're beginning to slip behind other countries when it comes to 5G deployment. This merger will get us back on track to lead on 5G, just like we've led other technology advancements. I'm looking forward to see what the new T-Mobile can do—and I appreciate all that they are doing for Veterans. Bravo Zulu.

Michael Schindler, a U.S. Navy veteran, is founder and CEO of Operation Military Family Cares, a nonprofit based in Edmonds that serves military and veteran families.

Correction: In earlier versions of this commentary, the estimate of jobs that could result from the merger, 24,960, should have clarified that the number includes indirect job creation in the rest of the economy and represents an annual average of jobs every year—not new jobs added annually.