

April 14th, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up  
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109; WC Docket 11-42**

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

As you know, the Lifeline program is vital, particularly in tough economic times, because it ensures people have access to a phone to report emergencies, stay in contact with a job opportunity, or connect with family. During the economic crisis that gripped Ohio, and as our economy still recovers from it, these programs are extremely important to my constituents and their families.

I appreciate your leadership in helping increase participation in these programs and reform them to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse. The majority of the FCC's proposed reforms rolled out at the March 3 meeting were fair and beneficial to the Lifeline program and its users. But there were three proposed changes that I believe would hurt the Lifeline program and the users of its services.

The FCC proposed a "minimum charge" to participate in wireless Lifeline programs as well as recommended the elimination of "self-certification" in the program – a move that would essentially force enrollees to provide onerous proof of poverty.

These proposals would create a major hurdle for those wishing to participate in the program. In fact, it would create an unfair obstacle for the potential end users who need Lifeline the most in these trying times. These programs have been successful in recent years because they are both free and easily accessible to the average qualifying consumer. If the FCC's recommendations are adopted, the program will be harmed as will the users.

Beyond those two issues, I also have a significant issue with the FCC's recommendation of capping support for the low-income portion of the Lifeline program. Again, this would hurt the type of end user who truly needs the program in the face of a poor economy in recent years and the high unemployment that has accompanied it.

As I have indicated, I truly support the FCC's attempt to modernize and strengthen the Lifeline program. However, I believe the proposed usage fees, the elimination of "self-certification" procedures, and the capping of the low-income portion of the program would cripple the major mission of Lifeline. On behalf of my constituents, and all Ohioans, I would urge you to reconsider those three proposals.

Thank you for your consideration and your leadership.

Sincerely,

CC:

Commissioner Michael J. Copps  
Commissioner Robert McDowell  
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn  
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker