March 29, 2104

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

Re: ***Ex Parte disclosure pursuant to WC Docket No. 11-42, In the Matter of Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization***

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On March 28, 2014, the following individuals met with Gigi Sohn and Daniel Alvarez with Chairman Wheeler's office: Andrea Quijada, Media Literacy Project (MLP) and amalia deloney, Center for Media Justice.

Andrea Quijada presented the staff with a photo petition in the form of a poster from MLP's Lifeline campaign, showing hundreds of New Mexicans that need this critical service. Additionally, Andrea explained that several factors demonstrate why subsidized phone service is a necessity for residents of her state:

- New Mexico often ranks as the poorest state in the nation
- Up to 50% of New Mexicans currently use or have used the Lifeline program
- Over 50% of New Mexicans are without broadband access
- New Mexico is the 5th largest state in the US, but ranked 36th for population—making it a state with many rural and remote communities

Andrea shared that the Social Security Number (SSN) requirement to receive a Lifeline subsidy creates a significant barrier for many residents in her state. As the Commission knows, 2012 Census data shows that 47% of New Mexico identifies as Latino. Many of these community members either lack a SSN or are afraid to share it with a government agency. As a result, many families are unable to subscribe for the Lifeline program—creating public safety concerns.

As a result, MLP asked the Commission to remove the eligibility requirement of providing the last four digits of their SSN to receive federal Lifeline support. MLP further stated that this barrier was particularly damaging given the impact it has on the vulnerable community members the program was designed to serve. MLP pointed out that that these are community members that work and pay taxes and deserve access to a service their taxes

pay for. MLP believes that New Mexico's Public Regulation Commission's strong Lifeline program management and rules are more than sufficient to deter fraud and surface duplicates before Lifeline service is authorized.

Finally, MLP shared concerns that focusing solely on issues of fraud and abuse inadvertently feels like criminalization to their constituents who are simply seeking a much-needed service. Instead, MLP would like to see a stronger effort made to recruit the 65% of people who are eligible for Lifeline, and who aren't currently using it, into the program.

Sincerely,

amalia deloney
Policy Director, Center for Media Justice

cc: Gigi Sohn
Daniel Alvarez