

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

U.S. Senate Floor Speech in support of Jessica Rosenworcel to be Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission

December 6, 2021

[\[VIDEO\]](#) [\[AUDIO\]](#)

Cantwell: Madam President, I know that we're expecting a vote shortly and I know the Majority Leader may make some motions and my colleague wants to speak so we're going to try to just move forward.

I've sent my condolences to the Dole family and thank our colleague for his heartfelt comments this afternoon.

Madam President, I rise to support President Biden's nomination to the FCC of Jessica Rosenworcel, to be the Chair of a new term of Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission.

In selecting her, President Biden picked someone with great experience, with great knowledge of the FCC at a moment where we need tremendous leadership. The FCC's oversight and scope touches just about every part of our domestic economy and our lives, and we know that in an information age it can be an exciting time of a lot of change but also of many real challenges.

So know that this FCC Chair will be challenged. There will be lots of things for every household from affordability, to reliability, to protecting consumers, to restoring an open and free internet, to driving new spectrum innovation policy, to safeguarding the public interest, there is a lot to do at the FCC.

The policy decisions before the FCC are substantial and Chairwoman Rosenworcel is committed to those priorities, and as I said, immensely qualified to lead at this critical moment. Before President Biden designated her to serve as Chair, Ms. Rosenworcel had spent nearly a decade at the FCC and she knows how to get things done, furthering the agency's work on important issues of helping to narrow the digital divide.

When the pandemic hit, we obviously had a new challenge facing us, how to get students connected, how to get health care connected, how to keep people living in disparity to get access to affordable broadband. For the Tribal community of one Nation, the Makah Nation.

Madam President, I will yield to the Majority Leader for his motions.

Madam President, I thank the Majority Leader for moving forward on the Rosenworcel nomination and I encourage my colleagues to vote yes.

I was mentioning the issues of disparity across our country, for those who don't have access to broadband, the Makah Tribe, located on the Northwest point of the Olympic Peninsula, 90% of those households don't have broadband.

I know Ms. Rosenworcel committed to both Senator Wicker and myself that she would work with us on the issue of broadband mapping. I know in one county in Mississippi, the home of my colleague, that it is estimated that the FCC broadband mapping overestimates internet coverage by a whopping 80%. This is unacceptable. We need accurate mapping and we need the broadband funding to move forward.

I know the Biden Administration understands the importance of affordability of broadband. I know they want to deploy broadband and make it more affordable and we want to work with them to make that happen.

Chairwoman Rosenworcel also looked at the issue of health care and the fact that the internet is now access to doctors, to medical information, to monitoring patients, to delivering health care, and keeping the lights on. This is also why I think her nomination is so important. She took time to first-hand visit telehealth in the State of Washington, in Seattle, and saw how we were pushing forward but yet the FCC is going to do more in this particular area.

Her leadership, I believe, will help her ensure that our spectrum policies continue to spur innovation and economic prosperity. I know that she will be able to look forward to these developing technologies and how best to include innovation, including the next 5G wireless technology communications.

All of this, I believe, means that we in the U.S. have a desire to keep pushing the envelope and to have a FCC that understands how to resolve these problems. I ask my colleagues to support her nomination and to move forward on these important policies so we all can work on them together.

I thank the President. I yield the floor.