Gigi Sohn for A Proactive, Consumer-Focused Federal Communications Commission

On January 4, 2022, President Joe Biden renominated Gigi Sohn to fill the fifth seat at the FCC. The five-member commission has been stuck in a 2-2 split since January 2021. The agency has a tremendous amount of work before it, and leaving it less than fully operational limits its capacity to most effectively and proactively:

- Finish updating the FCC’s broadband maps to ensure the billions of dollars appropriated by Congress in the bipartisan infrastructure bill are distributed equitably and to areas that need it most;
- Restore the agency’s authority to regulate broadband under Title II of the Communications Act and restore net neutrality rules;
- Strengthen programs created to ensure low-income people can afford communications services, like Lifeline and the Affordable Connectivity Program;
- Create rules to ensure our nation’s communications networks are more reliable and resilient to natural disasters, the climate crisis, and other threats;
- Halt the dangerous trend of increased consolidation and monopolization within the broadcast and telecommunications sectors, and much more.

The Senate must provide the FCC with a governing majority by confirming Sohn without delay.

Background

- Sohn has over 30 years of experience working on communications policy, and she has a demonstrated track-record of bringing together varied stakeholders in bipartisan coalitions to fight for equitable broadband policy, consumer protections, competition and the open-internet. Her experience would make her an asset at the agency as it works to implement the mandates of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- She served as a top aide to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler. During her time at the agency, the FCC adopted the only net neutrality rules that have withstood legal challenges to their statutory authority, modernized the Lifeline program, adopted strong privacy rules for broadband providers and more.
- Sohn helped found and lead a non-profit focused on promoting an open and competitive communications and technology market.

Support

- Nearly 250 organizations and individuals — including leading civil rights, community media, media justice, workers rights and consumer advocacy groups, companies and trade associations — from across the political spectrum have sent letters to the Senate and publicly called for her swift confirmation.
- Sohn has received support from right-wing outlets that appreciate her work fighting to curb the power of broadcast and cable incumbents and ensure competition in the media.
- More than 110,000 people have signed petitions calling for Sohn’s confirmation since her initial nomination in October 2021.
- Almost a quarter million activists have called for the FCC to gain a governing majority since January 2021.

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation  
512 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  

November 16, 2021  

Dear Senate Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,  

We are writing to urge the swift and concurrent confirmation of Jessica Rosenworcel and Gigi Sohn for the Federal Communications Commission and Alan Davidson for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. These agencies urgently need Senate-confirmed leaders to address the critical need for affordable and resilient access to the open internet in the midst of a global pandemic and worsening climate crisis. Through bipartisan infrastructure legislation, Congress has given these agencies enormous tasks on tight deadlines. These exceptional nominees’ appointments so late in the year means there can be no delay in confirming them and getting started in earnest on all of that urgent work.  

These three nominees each bring decades of experience, a commitment to the public interest, and the skills necessary to fulfill the missions of these agencies.  

Jessica Rosenworcel’s tenure at the FCC makes her an exceptional pick for FCC Chair. She is a respected and principled advocate with a proven record of fighting for the public interest. She has long championed efforts to ensure everyone in America, particularly schoolchildren, have affordable and reliable high-speed broadband to provide them with the tools they need for a successful future. Chairwoman Rosenworcel’s efforts to close the “homework gap” embody that commitment. As Acting Chair, she quickly and successfully launched the Emergency Broadband Benefit, a program that is now helping millions of Americans afford access to the internet.  

For over 30 years, Gigi Sohn’s priority has been ensuring that modern communications networks are available to everybody, regardless of who they are or where they live. Her life’s work has embodied the standard on which the FCC bases its decisions: the public interest. She served as a top aide to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and helped found and lead a non-profit focused on promoting an open and competitive communications and technology market. She has a proven record of bringing together varied stakeholders, including public interest advocates and companies, in bipartisan coalitions to fight for equitable broadband policies, consumer protections, competition and the open internet.
Alan Davidson has over 20 years of experience in government, industry and public interest advocacy, making him an ideal candidate to take up the interagency work of the NTIA, and to guide not only NTIA’s existing spectrum allocation and broadband policy work, but also its greatly increased grantmaking and coordinating role in implementation of the bipartisan infrastructure bill’s broadband funding provisions.

Even before the pandemic struck over 21 months ago, 2019 Census data showed that nearly 80 million people in the U.S. did not have adequate broadband at home. According to that data, poor families and people of color are disproportionately disconnected — only 48 percent of low-income households had a fixed broadband connection at that time, and 13 million Black people, 18 million Latinx people and 1.3 million Indigenous people lacked this kind of adequate home connectivity. Digital divide indicators like education and income disparities demonstrate that many Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and ethnic groups are also disproportionately impacted, and some AAPI communities and individuals with reduced English proficiency levels may adopt broadband at lower rates than the national average.

At the same time communities across the country are facing more frequent extreme weather events due to the climate crisis, and those events are taking down crucial communications infrastructure on an increasingly regular basis.

And while Congress passed historic legislation to address broadband affordability and accessibility for both urban and rural communities in the midst of the pandemic, the FCC and NTIA’s ability to administer these Congressional directives — as well as their ability to promote affordability, competition, privacy, sound spectrum policy, and network resiliency along with other consumer protections using existing authorities — has been limited by the deadlocked FCC and the lack of an Assistant Secretary at NTIA.

Any delay in confirming all three of these nominees will stall progress on achieving those goals and ensuring that everyone in the United States is able to access robust, affordable high-speed internet.

We urge you to confirm these three public-interest champions before the Senate recesses at the end of the year. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

18 Million Rising
Access Humboldt
Akaku Maui Community Media
Alliance for Community Media
American Library Association
Appalshop Community Media Initiative

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2 See id.

Benton Institute for Broadband & Society
Branford Community Television
California Center for Rural Policy
California Clean Money Campaign
Capital Community Media
CATS Community Access Television Services
Center for Accessible Technology
City of New Bedford Cable Access - New Bedford, MA
Color of Change
Common Sense
Communications Workers of America
Communities Closing the Urban Digital Divide
Community Media Access Collaborative
Decode Democracy
Demand Progress Education Fund
Democracy for America
Derry Community Access Media
Duluth Public Access Community Television
Electronic Frontier Foundation
FC Public Media
Fight for the Future
Free Press Action
Friends of the Earth
Granby Community Access and Media, Inc.
The Greenlining Institute
Greenpeace USA
Hawaii Consumers
Illinois for Educational Equity
Indivisible Sacramento
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Libraries Without Borders US
Local TV, inc
Lynn Community Television
Massachusetts Community Media dba MassAccess
Media Alliance
Media, Inequality & Change Center
MediaJustice
Melrose Massachusetts Television
Movement Alliance Project
Mozilla Foundation
National Association of the Deaf
National Consumers League
Native Public Media
The New Hampshire Coalition for Community Media
Newark for Educational Equity & Diversity
North Shore TV
NTEN
OD Action
The OMNI Centre for Public Media, Inc.
OMNI Productions
Open MIC (Open Media and Information Companies Initiative)
Open Technology Institute
OpenMedia
Orion Neighborhood Television (ONTV)
The Other 98%
Our Revolution
PhillyCAM
Presente.org
Progress America
Public Knowledge
Revolving Door Project
RootsAction.org
Salem Community Television, Salem NH
Salina Media Connection; Community Access TV of Salina, Inc.,
San Diego Futures Foundation
Tahoe Truckee Media
Telecommunications for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc. (TDI)
TURN - The Utility Reform Network
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry
Valley Shore Community Television Inc.
Western New York Library Resources Council
Winchester Community Access & Media, Inc.
Writers Guild of America West
X-Lab
November 16, 2021

SUPPORT SWIFT CONFIRMATION OF ROSENWORCEL, SOHN TO FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

Senator Maria Cantwell
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 230 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, and the undersigned organizations, we write to convey our strong support for the nominations of Jessica Rosenworcel and Gigi B. Sohn to serve as chair and commissioner, respectively, of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). We urge the committee to report the nominations to the full Senate favorably and promptly. At a time when access to reliable, diverse news and information, as well as affordable broadband and communications, is paramount, a fully staffed FCC is a top priority for the nation and for the constituencies we represent. Both Ms. Rosenworcel and Ms. Sohn are exemplary nominees for their respective positions and should be swiftly confirmed.

Universal and affordable access to telecommunications services and diverse media enables vital communications with family, friends, and employers; provides access to invaluable health information, emergency services, social services, and education; and promotes participation in our 21st century democracy and economy. Our coalition is committed to ensuring that media and telecommunications policy affirms and extends our nation’s longstanding commitment to civil rights.

Ms. Rosenworcel’s direct experience with the commission, which includes nine years at the agency, and most recently as acting chair, demonstrates she is particularly well-positioned to lead the FCC at this pivotal time. Under her leadership, the FCC successfully implemented several time-sensitive and nationally important programs to address the COVID-19 pandemic, including the Emergency Broadband Benefit, which offers monthly financial
support to low-income households. Throughout her career, Ms. Sohn has dedicated herself to the public interest, whether through her service on the Presidential Advisory Commission on the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters, her advocacy for policies that promote diversity and competition in the non-profit sector, or her time at the FCC as a senior counselor to the chairman.

Both nominees have shown they will establish a collaborative process and dialogue with the civil rights community as well as consult with the community members who are often left out of commission deliberations, including people of color, people with disabilities, low-income communities, incarcerated individuals, and other marginalized communities. In addition, both nominees would bring diversity to the commission. If confirmed, Ms. Rosenworcel would be the FCC’s first permanent female chair and Ms. Sohn would be the commission’s first openly LGBTQ commissioner.

Without confirmation of both nominees to these positions this year, the FCC will be left with only three commissioners. The need for swift action on these nominations is therefore critical. After nine months without a working majority, the FCC has a significant workload before it. The civil rights agenda at the FCC requires rapid, focused attention. Congress has now adopted the Affordable Connectivity Program, an improved, permanent version of the Emergency Broadband Benefit, and the commission will need to move quickly to implement this program and ensure that all the commission’s programs for low-income people are more effective and easier for their beneficiaries to use. Other civil rights priorities include finishing the congressionally mandated 2018 Quadrennial Review this year; completing the next review that will start immediately in 2022; implementing Congress’ directive to collect equal employment opportunity data in this sector; and a long-delayed proceeding addressing the dysfunctional market and unjust practices in incarcerated communications.

There is a tremendous overlap between media and telecommunications policies and civil rights, and the FCC’s leaders must apply that understanding in setting the commission’s agenda. To that end, we urge the committee to discuss with the nominees the importance of placing civil rights at the center of the commission’s agenda and to press them to create an Office of Civil Rights to ensure every aspect of the agency’s docket is consistent with our nation’s highest values. Moreover, the FCC is in a unique position to address privacy in the industries it oversees. Processing of personal data should promote equity and justice as it enhances safety, economic opportunity, and convenience for all.

Ms. Rosenworcel and Ms. Sohn are highly qualified, possess deep knowledge of the challenges faced by disadvantaged populations, and have a demonstrated commitment to collaboration with civil rights stakeholders. For these reasons, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation should move quickly to report these nominees favorably to the full Senate. Should you have any questions, please contact Leadership Conference Media/Telecommunications Task Force Co-Chair Cheryl Leanza, United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry, at cleanza@alhmail.com or Bertram Lee, Jr., media/tech counsel, at lee@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
A. Philip Randolph Institute
AFL-CIO
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
American Federation of Teachers
Andrew Goodman Foundation, Inc.
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Center for Disability Rights
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Communications Workers of America
Crescent City Media Group
Equality California
Feminist Majority Foundation
Hispanic Federation
Japanese American Citizens League
League of Conservation Voters
MediaJustice
National Black Justice Coalition
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
National Fair Housing Alliance
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Citizen
Silver State Equality-Nevada
Southern Echo Inc.
The Trevor Project
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry
November 15, 2021

Senator Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
Senate Commerce Committee  
United States Senate  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Senate Commerce Committee  
United States Senate  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

On behalf of the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition, the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), and the undersigned organizations, we write to express our strong support for Jessica Rosenworcel to serve as the Chair of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Gigi Sohn to serve as a Commissioner on the FCC, and Alan Davidson to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

The SHLB Coalition is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit advocacy organization that strives to close the digital divide by promoting open, affordable, high-quality broadband for anchor institutions and their communities. SHLB has over 300 members from across the US, including hundreds of commercial and nonprofit organizations who support our mission.

NDIA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act. Working collaboratively with digital inclusion practitioners, NDIA advocates for broadband access, tech devices, digital skills training, and tech support. NDIA currently represents 625 affiliate organizations located in 46 states.

We urge the Senate Commerce Committee to advance the nomination of Rosenworcel for an additional term without delay. Her impressive range of work and extensive experience as a commissioner on the FCC makes her well suited to serve as its chair. She is committed to closing the “homework gap” and has overseen the rollout and implementation of several critical federal programs that make technology more accessible and affordable for Americans, including the Emergency Broadband Benefit program and the Emergency Connectivity Fund – the most significant federal programs yet to address internet affordability. By taking a lead role on spectrum policy reforms and expanding affordable broadband access to households, schools, libraries, and healthcare providers, Rosenworcel has demonstrated outstanding leadership as acting FCC Chair.
We also urge the Senate Commerce Committee to advance the nomination of Sohn for Commissioner on the FCC without delay. Sohn has been a long-time advocate for internet freedom, consumer protection, and digital inclusivity. Though steadfast in her principles, she has a deep and realistic understanding of the digital marketplace and its practical and economic challenges. In turn, she recognizes the need to work with others from all sides of every issue to achieve a more open, affordable, and privacy-protective communications landscape. Accordingly, she is well-respected by technology policy stakeholders on both sides of the political aisle as well as by for-profit and nonprofit institutions. Sohn possesses an unmatched level of knowledge, leadership, and experience in her field, making her extremely well qualified to serve as an FCC Commissioner.

Finally, we urge the Senate Commerce Committee to advance the nomination of Davidson for Assistant Secretary of Commerce and Administrator of NTIA without delay. Given his vast expertise in technology policy and digital access issues, Davidson will be a steady and effective leader at the NTIA. He has worked in policy areas such as free expression, content regulation, encryption, and copyright, while maintaining a commitment to the public interest. His experience and skills make him well suited for his prospective role at the NTIA.

The FCC and NTIA have and will continue to play an extremely important role in digital policy — particularly given the passing of the Infrastructure Expansion Act of 2021 and the growing influx of federal money for broadband and digital inclusion programs. As such, strong and effective leadership at the FCC and NTIA is crucial to ensuring a more efficient and equitable digital future for America. We thus urge the Senate Commerce Committee to promptly confirm the nominations of Rosenworcel for FCC Chair, Sohn for FCC Commissioner, and Davidson for NTIA Assistant Secretary of Commerce and NTIA Administrator.

Thank you,

Valerie Oliver
Alaska State Library

Mike Wassenaar
Alliance for Community Media

Alan Inouye
American Library Association

ROBERT W STEWART
Asbury Park Free Public Library

Jason Hardebeck
Baltimore City Mayor’s Office

Andrew Jay Schwartzman
Benton Institute for Broadband & Society
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<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
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<td>Sunne Wright McPeak</td>
<td>California Emerging Technology Fund</td>
<td>TERI LAWRENCE</td>
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<td>Stephen D Rau</td>
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<td>Elisabeth Perez</td>
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<td>Kimberly Friends</td>
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<td>Shawn Daugherty</td>
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<td>Erin Carr-Jordan</td>
<td>Digital Equity Institute</td>
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<td>Carrie Coogan</td>
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<td>Kansas City Public Library</td>
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<td>Michelle Harati</td>
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<td>Sulaiman Kenyatta</td>
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<td>Brandon Forester</td>
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<td>Joseph Sawasky</td>
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<td>Merit Network, Michigan</td>
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<td>Gina Dircks</td>
<td>Jesse Bradley</td>
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<td>Nishal Mohan</td>
<td>John Windhausen</td>
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<td>Schools, Health &amp; Libraries Broadband Coalition</td>
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<td>Susan Corbett</td>
<td>Jeannene Hurley</td>
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<td>National Digital Equity Center</td>
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<td>Angela Siefer</td>
<td>Coree Kelly</td>
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Julia Fallon  
State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)  

Andy Stutzman  
Technology Learning Collaborative  

JJ McGrath  
Texoma Communications, LLC  

Samantha Schartman  
The Marconi Society  

Robert Plymale  
Thundercloud, Inc.  

Susan Benton  
Urban Libraries Council  

Roger Timmerman  
UTOPIA Fiber  

Jessamyn West  
Vermont Mutual Aid Society  

Kristen Perry  
Voqal  

Jennifer Evans  
West Hartford Community Interactive  

Tessa Michaelson Schmidt  
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Dear Senators Sinema and Kelly,

We write to convey the rapidly growing urgency to confirm Jessica Rosenworcel as the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) permanent chair and Gigi Sohn as a fifth commissioner. The FCC will have a 2-1 Republican majority if the Senate does not confirm Rosenworcel and Sohn by the end of the year. The Senate must act quickly.

Arizona needs a fully functional FCC to help close the digital divide, particularly acute in our state. In eight of Arizona’s fifteen counties, more than two-thirds of households lack access to high-speed broadband.¹ Low-income families, Native Americans, and people of color are disproportionately disconnected, compounding grave inequalities that were made worse during the pandemic.

Broadband access is a significant problem for families living on reservations in Arizona. Tribes are some of the least connected communities in the United States, and eighteen percent of tribal reservation residents have no internet access at home.² The 22 federally recognized Tribes in Arizona face unique connectivity challenges at a time when broadband access has proven essential for distance learning, telehealth appointments, meetings over video platforms, connecting to remote work, and much more.

Given the legislative calendar and the diminishing number of days for hearings and confirmation votes, we have reached a critical point to guarantee the agency charged with ensuring affordable communications access can do its work. Failing to confirm a permanent chair and a fifth commissioner leaves the FCC less than fully operational and limits its capacity to most effectively:

- Finish long-overdue reforms to the FCC’s outdated and inaccurate broadband maps, which are used to direct federal infrastructure investments;
- Strengthen the Lifeline program, which helps low-income households afford telephone and internet service;
- Create rules to make our nation’s communications networks more reliable and resilient to natural disasters and other threats;
- Guide the deployment of new broadband infrastructure built with federal dollars to make it as effective as possible;
- Protect consumers and workers from anticompetitive, job-killing mergers in the telecommunications sector;
- Approve emergency waivers for E-rate funded infrastructure to be opened up for remote education; and

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Meet the challenge of the 2018 Broadcast Ownership Quadrennial Review and halt the dangerous trend towards consolidated ownership in broadcasting by reasserting principles of localism, competition and ownership diversity.

The FCC has the singular ability to ensure affordable and reliable communications for all. The pandemic showed us the unshakable image of children doing their classwork from fast-food parking lots using borrowed WiFi. We cannot let those students or any family wait any longer. If we are to reach the goal of having a country where everyone, no matter their address or size of their bank account, has affordable access to high-speed internet, we need a full commission immediately. We urge Congress not to lose any more time and to confirm Jessica Rosenworcel and Gigi Sohn by the end of the year.

Sincerely,

Cat’s in the Cradle New Life Sanctuary
Common Sense
Gila River Telecommunications, Inc.
LISC Phoenix
Native Public Media
NTEN
Red Rock Mountain Studios LLC
Rural Arizona Action
Swinging Sixties Productions
Terabyte Media LLC
Dear Senators Cantwell and Wicker,

We, the undersigned public interest organizations, submit this letter as members of Broadband Connects America (“BCA”), a coalition of diverse national, state-based, and local nonprofit organizations, as well as state agencies, that advocate for policies to promote broadband access in underserved rural areas. We write to urge the swift and concurrent confirmation of Jessica Rosenworcel for Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chair, Gigi Sohn for FCC Commissioner, and Alan Davidson for Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). These agencies need immediate leadership to bring affordable, reliable, high-speed internet to rural and Tribal communities. A failure to confirm them all before the end of this year will jeopardize the ability of rural communities to engage in modern society as others with the internet can.

Over the last two years, as the COVID-19 pandemic took root in the United States, it became clear that broadband is an essential service and that the government must take action to connect people across the nation. In order to ensure the steps Congress has taken to help close the digital divide can succeed, these agencies need Senate-confirmed leaders. Each of these nominees bring the decades of experience and commitment required to connect rural and Tribal communities.

During Jessica Rosenworcel’s tenure at the FCC, she has rapidly implemented a Congressional program to bring broadband to millions of people who could not previously afford it; championed the need for reliable data on broadband availability that will ensure communities are not wrongfully denied broadband deployment funding, and connected tribes by providing them with unlicensed spectrum to buildout broadband and by making Tribal libraries eligible for E-Rate funds. This experience alone makes her an exceptional choice for FCC Chair. Additionally, she is a widely respected leader in tech
policy, a dedicated consumer advocate, and a swift decision maker who will most certainly bridge the digital divide.

Likewise, Gigi Sohn is an experienced consumer advocate who has done more to close the digital divide than almost anyone else in the field. During Gigi’s career, including working as a top advisor to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and as the co-Founder and CEO of Public Knowledge, she has tirelessly championed universal connectivity to a free and open internet. Gigi is known for bringing together strange bedfellows to get the job done -- including public interest groups, industry, urban & rural, and stakeholders from across the aisle. Her pragmatism will ensure that rural communities are no longer left on the wrong side of the digital divide because of partisan fights.

Finally, Alan Davidson has over 20 years of experience in government, industry, and public interest advocacy, making him an ideal candidate to lead the NTIA. If passed, the bipartisan infrastructure package and budget reconciliation bill will give the NTIA responsibility for multiple programs that will connect rural and Tribal communities, including a $42.5 billion broadband deployment program, a grant program to promote digital equity, and a program to give low-income consumers the devices they so urgently need to connect. Alan Davidons’s leadership experience, both within industry and the public interest sector, positions him to successfully stand up these important programs to get rural and Tribal communities connected.

The FCC and the NTIA have a lot of work ahead of them, and these three experienced and committed nominees’ appointments cannot be delayed any further if we want people across the country to ring in the new year with newly adopted broadband. Thus, Congress must confirm all three nominees before the end of the year. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Access Humboldt
Benton Institute for Broadband and Society
California Center for Rural Policy
Center for Rural Strategies
ConnectMaine
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Maine Broadband Coalition
National Digital Equity Center
Public Knowledge
Rural Wireless Association, Inc.
The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi
Together for Hope: A Rural Development Coalition
X-Lab
November 23, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chair  Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science  Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation  and Transportation
United States Senate  United States Senate
254 Russell Senate Office Bldg  512 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510  Washington, DC 20510

Re: Nomination of Acting-Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel for Chairman, Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Nomination of Ms. Gigi B. Sohn for Commissioner, FCC

Nomination of Mr. Alan Davidson for Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

The undersigned communications industry trade organizations write in support of President Biden’s nominees for the FCC and NTIA and urge their swift consideration by your committee and final confirmation by the Senate.

The telecommunications industry is an important part of the US economy accounting for over 2% of Gross Domestic Product. The telecommunications sector is responsible for as many as 10 million jobs and trillions of dollars of investment. Decisions of the FCC and NTIA impact every American consumer.

The recently enacted Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) gives both agencies important roles. Additionally, both agencies are in the process of administering programs authorized through the CARES Act of 2020 and American Rescue Plan of 2021 Act which include several programs to address pandemic related telecommunications issues. A full complement of five FCC Commissioners and a permanent Administrator for NTIA is vital to implement these programs and ensure progress on critical initiatives for our country, including broadband accessibility and affordability, roll out of 5G, and securing telecommunications networks.

The Administration has nominated Ms. Rosenworcel, Ms. Sohn and Mr. Davidson. Each of these nominees is eminently qualified to hold the positions for which they have been nominated and possess the academic background, the qualifications, and expertise to serve as leaders on telecommunications policy.
Given the once in a generation level of the investment the government is making in broadband to advance our nation, we urge the Senate to move quickly to confirm nominees for these key positions.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Matthew Schruers  
President  
CCIA

/s/Gary Bolton  
President & CEO  
Fiber Broadband Association

/s/Chip Pickering  
CEO  
INCOMPAS
November 29, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair, Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science and Transportation
Russell Senate Office Building 254
Washington, DC 20002

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member on
Commerce, Science and Transportation
Dirksen Senate Office Building 512
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

We write to offer our strong support for the nomination and swift confirmation of Gigi Sohn to serve as Commissioner to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Although we don’t agree with Gigi on every communications policy matter, she is a thoughtful and pragmatic leader who is willing to work across the aisle and across the ideological spectrum to make progress to ensure that all US households have robust broadband. She has helped improve the quality of life for rural underserved communities with her work on rural broadband deployment and adoption policies.

Ms. Sohn regularly works to forge relationships and alliances with stakeholders across the aisle and with diverse community leaders. When industry has sought the involvement of someone to represent consumer interests, they seek out Gigi first because of her credibility and fairness. For example, she served as Co-Chair of the Broadband Internet Technology Advisory Group (BITAG), which convened network engineers and technical experts from industry and academia to examine and develop a consensus on internet network management practices. The purpose of BITAG was to assist in the creation of acceptable industry standards, as opposed to heavy handed enforcement and regulation.

Over Ms. Sohn’s 30 years of experience in telecommunications, broadband and technology policy has shown she has a strong commitment to the First Amendment. She has regularly worked with organizations representing conservative media interests to ensure all voices and views are heard both as a consumer advocate and as a government official. The FCC will make critical decisions to maintain a competitive and open media environment. Her consistent and long held support of diversity in viewpoints in media will serve all voices well.

We are confident that Ms. Sohn will take her pragmatic and collaborative skills to her new role at the FCC as a commissioner if confirmed by the Senate.

Sincerely,

Hilda Gay Legg - Former USDA Rural Development State Director for Kentucky and the Former Administrator for RUS

Chip Pickering – CEO of INCOMPAS, Former Republican Congressman from Mississippi

Chad Rupe - managing member of Rural America Strategies LLC

Daniel Linville - West Virginia House of Delegates - Chairman of the Committee on Technology and Infrastructure

Judson Hill - Former Republican Georgia State Senator
Nov 2, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
511 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan  
498 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Thune  
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cantwell, Wicker, Lujan, and Thune,

On behalf of ADT Security Services, the leading provider of electronic security and alarm monitoring services in the United States, with more than 20,000 employees across the country, I am writing to express our strong support for Gigi Sohn’s nomination to join the Federal Communications Commission as a Commissioner.

At ADT, we believe everyone deserves to feel safe. Our customers depend on our security and monitoring services, whether they are dealing with life safety threats resulting from an intrusion, a health crisis, a flood, carbon monoxide (CO) threat, or a fire. Those services depend on customer access to robust, reliable connections to our alarm monitoring centers and, in turn, public safety officials and first responders. While technology has changed over the course of ADT’s nearly 150-year history, our customers’ expectations have not. Our customers expect us to help keep them safe, and we don’t take that trust for granted.

Gigi Sohn has taken the time to learn the ins and outs of the electronic security industry and has been a regular speaker at industry events year after year. She is trusted and respected within our industry. Ms. Sohn has introduced members of our industry to her own broad network, and has given an industry like ours, comprised mainly of small, regional businesses, a voice in national policy debates. Having worked with Ms. Sohn for years, I have found her to be highly knowledgeable, egalitarian, and above all, reasonable.
Over the past year and a half, the American public has become critically aware of the divide between the digital haves and have-nots. When jobs, schools, and even alarm monitoring moved to a home environment, the quality of one’s internet connection quickly became paramount. As the FCC looks for new and innovative ways to expand access to quality, affordable communications networks for all Americans, I have no doubt that Ms. Sohn’s passion for universal connectivity and her collaborative spirit will be an asset to the Commission.

On behalf of ADT, I respectfully ask that you vote to confirm Gigi Sohn.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Holly Borgmann

cc: Senator Marco Rubio
    Senator Rick Scott
November 4, 2021

The Honorable Roy Blunt
US Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Re: FCC Nomination of Gigi Sohn

Dear Senator Blunt:

I am writing to express Socket Telecom’s strong support for the nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission. Socket has a long history as a competitive telecom and Internet provider in Missouri, and Ms. Sohn has worked tirelessly throughout her entire career to advance competition and consumer choice in telecommunications and broadband.

The success of our company was made possible through the landmark and bipartisan Telecommunications Act of 1996. The Act’s market-opening provisions allowed us to bring Missouri consumers and small businesses competitive options, pricing and service, many for the first time. In 2011, Socket began to expand its reach by building a brand new fiber optic network to reach homes and businesses in rural Callaway County and Fulton. We have been expanding this fiber network ever since, now reaching 18 counties in Missouri, and as a result, thousands of customers now enjoy reliable, competitive high-speed internet service delivered over Socket’s Fiber Optic Network.

Today, Socket employs approximately 160 people, with offices across Missouri. We’re proud to be Missouri’s local competitive telecommunications provider, and we are working tirelessly to bring state-of-the-art technology and friendly, local support to as many homes and businesses as possible.

Gigi Sohn has been a friend to the competitive telecom and Internet industry. As a public interest and consumer advocate, she has been a steadfast champion for competition as the best path, and we have no doubt she will continue to do so at the Commission. It is critical for the Commission to have its full complement of Commissioners confirmed as soon as possible so that the issues in front of the FCC today—like broadband mapping—are implemented quickly to ensure that broadband funding goes to those areas that are most in need of new network deployment. This is an issue of significant importance as Socket has been seeking funding for Missouri communities that have been left behind.

We urge you to vote to confirm Gigi Sohn as Commissioner for the Federal Communications Commission. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Carsten Coffman
President
November 8th, 2021

The Honorable Cynthia Lummis
United States Senate
100 East B St
Casper, Wyoming 82601

Dear Senator Lummis:

I am writing to support the nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission. As you know, Visionary Broadband is a small Wyoming-based broadband company that is able to serve consumers here due to the existence of long-standing competitive policies at the FCC.

Throughout Ms. Sohn’s public and private sector career she has been a supporter of small, competitive broadband companies regarding the many policy debates impacting smaller carriers. From the policy battles around Special Access to the Forbearance Petitions involving the Unbundled Network Elements (UNE) regime, Ms. Sohn has been an effective advocate. Our company has been able to offer more efficient and less expensive service to consumers in Wyoming due to our ability to compete in this once monopoly-dominated market.

Ms. Sohn is a respected lawyer and previously served in a key role at the FCC under a former Chairman. She has an excellent understanding of the complex issues facing the FCC today and will be able to hit the ground running at the commission. I hope you will be able to be supportive of her nomination.

Sincerely,

Brian Worthen
CEO, Visionary Broadband
November 11, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Recommendation for Confirmation of Nominated FCC Commissioners Jessica Rosenworcel and Gigi Sohn

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

The Rural Wireless Association ("RWA")1 is writing to recommend that the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation confirm the nomination of Jessica Rosenworcel as Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC" or "Commission") and move quickly to schedule a confirmation hearing for Gigi Sohn as an FCC Commissioner.

Both of these nominees are extremely qualified for their positions. As Acting Chair of the FCC for the past 9 months, Rosenworcel has been a good steward and a strong advocate for continued investment and innovation in wired and wireless broadband networks. Rosenworcel has also been supportive of Congress’ goal to build next generation networks in unserved and underserved areas and to close the digital divide. RWA believes that, with a fully staffed Commission, Rosenworcel can be instrumental in directing the Commission’s full attention towards building and maintaining networks in rural America to keep all Americans connected.

Ms. Sohn is also more than qualified to be confirmed as an FCC Commissioner. For over 30 years, Ms. Sohn has relentlessly served the public interest and helped to keep Big Tech in check. She is an advocate for all consumers, both urban and rural, and has worked tirelessly to close the digital divide and to ensure that diverse voices (including all rural stakeholders) are heard and protected. She previously served as an advisor to FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler and in that role Ms. Sohn advised the chairman on a multitude of telecommunications, internet, and media issues. RWA has worked with Ms. Sohn on issues ranging from universal service reform to ensuring spectrum auctions are conducted in a manner that allows small and rural carriers to gain access to spectrum to serve rural communities. Ms. Sohn has worked with RWA to ensure that VoLTE roaming is implemented fairly so that rural consumers do not get left behind. Her nomination also speaks to President Biden’s desire to be inclusive and to promote diversity across all sectors of the federal government as Sohn will be the first openly LGBTQ+ Commissioner.

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1 RWA is a 501(c)(6) trade association dedicated to promoting wireless opportunities for rural telecommunications companies who serve consumers who, reside, work, or travel in rural America. RWA’s members are small businesses serving or seeking to serve secondary, tertiary, and rural markets. Each of RWA’s member companies serves fewer than 100,000 subscribers.
With the legislative calendar year coming to an end, its becoming more likely that the Commission will be shorthanded by the new year. Given the influx of broadband-related initiatives being passed and proposed by Congress, it is in the country’s best interest to keep the Commission functioning fully staffed with five commissioners. RWA eagerly awaits the confirmation of Rosenworcel as FCC Chairwoman and a scheduled date for Sohn’s confirmation hearing this year.

Respectfully submitted,

RURAL WIRELESS ASSOCIATION, INC.

By: /s/ Carri Bennet

____________________________
Carri Bennet, General Counsel
Stephen Sharbaugh, Legislative and Policy Analyst
5185 MacArthur Blvd., NW, Suite 729
Washington, DC 20016
(202) 857-4519
legal@ruralwireless.org
November 15, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

On behalf of the members and officers of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), I am writing in strong support of the nominations of Jessica Rosenworcel to serve as Chair of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Gigi Sohn for Commissioner. Not only will they continue to lead the FCC into the future by encouraging the equitable deployment of next-generation broadband networks, they will also ensure that the concerns of workers and consumers are the top priority.

As Commissioner and Acting Chair at the FCC, Rosenworcel has fought steadily to ensure access to telecommunications services for all Americans. For example, Rosenworcel’s work has drawn attention to problems with the FCC’s collection of data on broadband access. She has advocated that in order to close the digital divide, we must have access to broadband maps and data that are accurate and reliable. This ensures that when broadband access is expanded, it reaches all communities, not just some. Further, Rosenworcel has been a champion for the protection and expansion of the Lifeline program, which connects low-income households to critical telecommunications services. She understands that these programs are especially important during public health and economic crises like those taking place right now.

Beyond her understanding of the policy issues, Rosenworcel has intimate knowledge of the families and workers behind the policy because she takes the time to understand both. Prior to the pandemic, Rosenworcel was an advocate for closing the Homework Gap by addressing the issue that millions of students take homework home from school but don’t have the internet access to complete it. She has been working on creative solutions to this issue for years, and since the pandemic has widened this gap, this work remains a top priority. Additionally, she has engaged CWA members in dialogue to provide perspective on the telecommunications issues that are hitting the communities we serve the hardest.

Throughout her career, Gigi Sohn has been a staunch advocate for the expansion of affordable internet access. During the T-Mobile/Sprint merger, Sohn was a key ally in the fight to protect the jobs of the working families who ultimately ended up being harmed by the merger. She believes in fighting to ensure that workers are protected first and foremost. Additionally, she supports efforts to hold broadband service providers accountable through state regulatory oversight. Her voice, experience and expertise are just what the FCC needs.

The leadership exhibited by these two women focus on greater opportunity, accessibility, and affordability in our communications services, especially broadband services. Further, their tireless advocacy on behalf of workers and consumers has never been more important. I strongly urge you to swiftly advance the nominations of Jessica
Rosenworcel and Gigi Sohn to serve as the next Chair and Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), as they are exactly the kind of leaders we need in this moment.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dan Mauer
Director of Government Affairs
Communications Workers of America (CWA)
November 12, 2021

Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Pat Toomey
455 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Mitt Romney
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Rob Portman
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John Boozman
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Tommy Tuberville
142 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator John Kennedy
416 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Murkowski, Toomey, Romney, Portman, Collins, Boozman, Tuberville, and Kennedy:

As a proud Republican, and Co-Chair of the Public Officials Committee of the Fiber Broadband Association in Washington, DC (representing 150 cities, towns, counties, and state agencies), I find myself in unfamiliar territory urging you to confirm Gigi Sohn, a member of the Democratic Party, as an FCC Commissioner.
I’m expressing strong support for Gigi Sohn because there’s a lot at stake for our nation’s economy. Nearly half of Americans can’t easily participate in the digital economy because they live in areas unserved or underserved by broadband providers. Ms. Sohn’s mastery of policy and her pragmatic approach will help expand broadband investment while helping to curb lip service from providers.

In the last few years, I’ve gotten to know Gigi Sohn as a charismatic and pragmatic leader in the telecommunications industry. I’ve found her to be thoughtful, thorough, prepared, and balanced. She not only understands how policy can impact our states and cities, but also how it can influence business and industry. **Ms. Sohn wants to see policy that spurs innovation and investment, as well as economic development and jobs.**

It should be noted that Big Telco is spending $8 million a week in Washington to preserve the status quo, and has labeled Ms. Sohn as an “activist.” They’re concerned that should she be appointed to the FCC, providers will need to be more accountable to consumers, businesses, and taxpayers (who’ve subsidized their efforts with little in return). Frankly, that’s exactly what the country needs to remain economically competitive in the digital age.

To achieve our national goals of expanding quality, affordable broadband service to all Americans, it will require an FCC Commissioner who can work collaboratively across party lines—and with industry, business, consumers, and local government. Gigi Sohn is that person.

I respectfully urge you and your Senate colleagues to confirm Gigi Sohn.

Please let me know if you’d like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Bob Knight,
Commissioner &
Co-Chair, Public Officials Committee
Fiber Broadband Association, Washington, DC

Cc. Geoffrey Morris, Chairman, Ridgefield ECDC
Kimberly McKinley, Deputy Director, Utah Infrastructure Agency, Committee Co-Chair
November 22, 2021

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
100 North Broadway
Suite 210
Wichita, Kansas 67202

Dear Senator Moran:

I am writing in support of the nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission.

As you know, IdeaTek is a Kansas-based small broadband provider that has strived to compete against the larger incumbent carriers for many years. We have been able to offer more efficient and affordable service to consumers and small businesses in Kansas due to our ability to compete in the monopoly-dominated broadband market.

While Ms. Sohn may have some more progressive views on matters that you and I may disagree with, she has been a strong advocate for small competitive broadband companies throughout her thirty-year career. We strive for customers to have freedom and choice when it comes to broadband services, and competitiveness is a crucial part of that mission. This issue outweighs other potential policy changes she may advocate for, as Ms. Sohn’s commitment to competitiveness is essential for the future of broadband.

Ms. Sohn is a respected lawyer and previously served in a key role at the FCC under a former Chair. She has an excellent understanding of the complex issues facing the FCC today and in the near future. It is my hope that you can join me in recognizing the dedication she displays to competitiveness in broadband, and the value she could bring to the agency and the industry it oversees.

Sincerely,

Daniel Friesen
Managing Partner & Chief Innovation Officer
November 30, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Re: Nomination of Gigi Sohn for Commissioner, Federal Communications Commission

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

I write to strongly support the nomination of Gigi Sohn to serve as Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and urge the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation to move her nomination forward expeditiously.

Ms. Sohn is extraordinarily qualified for this position. Her record reflects a long and distinguished career in technology, media and telecommunications policy as a consumer advocate, public servant and academic. In addition, she is widely recognized for her commitment to principle over partisanship and is deeply respected by industry, civil society groups, Republicans and Democrats.

More, Ms. Sohn has always been a strong defender of free speech and an advocate of robust, substantive debate. Our First Amendment is nonpartisan and has been respected by Republican and Democratic FCC commissioners alike. Ms. Sohn has an extensive record of writing and speaking in defense of free speech and as FCC Commissioner would uphold free expression by those with different views.

The FCC’s work has never been more important for preserving a strong economy and strengthening America’s global leadership. Until Ms. Sohn is confirmed, the absence of a full Commission will continue to hold the agency back from addressing the nation’s most pressing communications policy issues. Ms. Sohn is a pragmatic, data-driven problem solver who understands what it takes to drive the future of work, education and ongoing innovation. Based on more than two decades of knowing Ms. Sohn, I am confident she will ask the critical questions and truly listen to the answers, regardless of whether they are consistent with her personal priorities.

Ms. Sohn has the qualifications of an FCC nominee that every Senator should be pleased and proud to confirm. I encourage you to do so.
Sincerely,

Gary Shapiro
President and CEO
Consumer Technology Association

cc: Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Republican Wicker,

The Alarm Industry Communications Committee (AICC) strongly supports the nominations of Jessica Rosenworcel as Chairwoman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Gigi Sohn for FCC commissioner.

Based upon our observations and experiences in working with both nominees, we have found them to fully understand and recognize the key role that telecommunications plays in helping to ensure public safety. They have both proven to be very accessible and willing to listen and learn how issues before the FCC would impact the ability of alarm monitoring companies to respond to emergencies experienced by individuals and businesses as a result of a break in, fire, carbon monoxide incident or in the case of seniors a health emergency that requires the dispatch of emergency responders.

They have both demonstrated strong support for consumer rights while at the same time being willing to understand the concerns of the small business-dominated alarm industry which is a key partner in the public safety network. An added benefit is that they both have a long history of working on telecommunications issues both inside and outside the FCC, which would make them immediately ready to address the myriad of issues before the Commission.

We urge the Senate to expeditiously take up and confirm the nominations of both these highly qualified candidates.

Sincerely,

Lou Fiore
Chairman Alarm Industry Communications Committee

Contact Bill Signer at signer@carmengroup.com or at (202) 515-2345 with questions.
December 6, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: FCC and NTIA Nominations

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

As technology and telecommunications leaders who are working to connect consumers and businesses to critical communications services across our great nation that are used to support every economic sector, including agriculture, education, health care, and manufacturing, we are writing today to express our strong support for expeditiously confirming President Biden’s nominees to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA).

FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, Ms. Gigi Sohn, and Mr. Alan Davidson have demonstrated through their many years of service in the technology and telecommunications sector, that they have the expertise and requisite skills required for their positions. With almost a decade of service as a Commissioner, now-Chairwoman Rosenworcel has effectively managed the FCC during a global pandemic and has implemented key emergency programs to connect students and families to broadband. Ms. Sohn is a well-known public advocate and thought leader with thirty years of experience who has focused her work on ensuring that modern communications services are available to every consumer. As a senior executive in the tech industry, Mr. Davidson has managed complex matters and has been a leader on open and accessible policies, enabling modern communications technology options in the U.S.

Both the FCC and NTIA are important agencies for advancing the nation’s broadband and communications connectivity goals, and they are in need of their full and permanent leadership to fulfill their missions as soon as possible. We urge you to move their nominations forward and confirm them.

Sincerely,

Douglas Denney  
VP Legal & Regulatory  
Allstream  
Vancouver, WA

Chris Levendos  
Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer—Fiber  
Crown Castle  
Houston, TX
Jeff Blum  
Senior Vice President, Public Policy and Government Affairs  
DISH  
Englewood, CO

Gregory A. Aymar  
Chief Executive Officer  
FiberComm  
Sioux City, IA

Kurt Van Wagenen  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
FirstLight Fiber  
Albany, NY

Gary Watts  
Chief Executive Officer  
Fuse.Cloud  
Jackson, MS

Michael B Galvin  
EVP & General Counsel  
Granite Telecommunications, LLC  
Quincy, MA

Fletcher Kittredge  
Chief Executive Officer  
GWI  
Biddeford, ME

Edward E. Hilliary, Jr.  
Managing Partner  
Hilliary Communications, LLC  
Lawton, OK

Jerrod Reimer  
President and CEO  
IdeaTek  
Buhler, KS

Edward J. O’Hara  
Chief Executive Officer  
InteliQuent  
Chicago, IL
Andoni Economou  
Chief Operating Officer  
**MetTel**  
New York, NY

Dane Jasper  
Chief Executive Offer  
**Sonic Telecom**  
Santa Rosa, CA

Rebecca H. Sommi  
VP Vendor Management  
**Specrotel Holding Company LLC**  
Neptune, NJ

Chet Kanojia  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Starry, Inc**  
Boston, MA

Joshua Broder  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Tilson**  
Portland, ME

Kenny Gunderman  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Uniti Group, Inc.**  
Little Rock, AR

Brian Worthen  
Chief Executive Officer  
**Visionary Broadband**  
Gillette, WY

Ray LaChance  
Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer  
**ZenFi Networks**  
New York, NY

Ted Gilliam  
General Counsel, Strategic and Regional Sales  
**Zayo**  
Boulder, CO
December 10th, 2021

Senator Maria Cantwell
Chair; U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Senator Roger Wicker
Ranking Member; U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

We represent a cross section of individuals and organizations that work to ensure freedom, justice and equality for LGBTQ+ people. We write to urge the swift confirmation of Gigi Sohn to serve as Commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Through her 30+ years of work in the non-profit sector and as Counselor to former FCC Chair Tom Wheeler, Gigi has demonstrated her dedication to ensuring that every American household has affordable and robust broadband Internet. The importance of such access to the LGBTQ+ community cannot be overstated. The Internet has served as a vital lifeline to many in the community, particularly in those places where for cultural or other reasons, it may be difficult to be open about one's orientation. The Internet has allowed LGBTQ+ people to find others like them, validating who they are and demonstrating that they are not alone.

Gigi would be the first openly LGBTQ+ Commissioner of the FCC. There have been only a handful of openly LGBTQ+ Commissioners of independent agencies history. Gigi can serve as a model to both communities and her life experience brings with it a perspective on how communications and media policies can work for the benefit of everyone in the US.

The job of the FCC is vitally important to ensure that everyone in the US can participate fully in our society, our economy, our education and health care systems and our civic life. Thus, it is critical that Senate confirm a strong individual who is not afraid to make tough decisions and can bring together the federal, state and local policymakers, rural and urban communities, the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors, digital equity and inclusion advocates and industry to build and execute a blueprint for closing the digital divide. With urge you to act quickly to ensure that the FCC benefits from the knowledge and expertise that Gigi Sohn would bring to this role.

Sincerely,

LGBTQ Victory Institute
David C. Bohnett
GLAAD
Human Rights Campaign
InterAct
LPAC Action Network
National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund
PFLAG
Woodhull Freedom Foundation
December 10, 2021

Senator Maria Cantwell  
Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Senator Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

As President and CEO of the LGBTQ Victory Institute, I write to support Gigi Sohn in their candidacy to serve as FCC Commissioner within the Biden-Harris Administration.

Victory Institute works to achieve and sustain global LGBTQ equality through leadership development, training, and convening to increase the number, expand the diversity, and ensure the success of openly LGBTQ elected and appointed officials at all levels of government.

Through her 30+ years of work in the non-profit sector and as Counselor to former FCC Chair Tom Wheeler, Gigi has demonstrated her dedication to ensuring that every American household has affordable and robust broadband Internet. We have worked closely with Gigi Sohn in the past; much of the work we do at the LGBTQ Victory Institute would not be possible without partners like Gigi in our federal government. In addition to skillfully advancing America's interests, Gigi Sohn also proudly represents the LGBTQ community. Gigi would be the first openly LGBTQ+ Commissioner of the FCC. There have been only a handful of openly LGBTQ+ Commissioners of independent agencies history.

We are thankful for Gigi’s continued service. We emphatically encourage the Biden-Harris Administration to move quickly to take advantage of Gigi’s exceptional experience and expertise, and continue to give effect to the President’s commitment that this Administration ‘look like America’.

I would be happy to further discuss with you Gigi Sohn’s impressive credentials.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mayor Annise Parker  
President & CEO
Dear Senator:

I write for the Veterans Committee and more than 1,000 members of my Democratic club, the largest in California. I write to support the nomination of Gigi Sohn for a seat on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). And I urge you to vote to confirm her, an exceptionally well-qualified team member and leader, to this important post of public service.

While serving in the Army stateside and overseas, I was usually able to hear and read English- and Spanish-language media, communicate by phone and e-mail with my family and friends, and access information, news, and updates through the Internet. Each of these was essential to my morale. When these lifelines were unreliable or cut off, it took a toll on my spirit, my sense of purpose, and my capacity to be the best soldier I could be.

Ten years ago, I was recuperating from grievous, life-altering wounds. My hospital room became my battlefield. I was fighting to regain not only my health, but also my independence. Three pivotal resources in that struggle toward wellness were social media as well as trustworthy e-mail access and cellular technology that was accessible, affordable, and uncensored.

As a servicemember, I came to depend on phone and digital communication platforms that were as free as the country I was fighting for. These lifelines, along with expert caregivers, made my recovery possible.

In the past decade, I learned, along with millions of Americans, that the freedom of modern technology and digital communication is faulty, and, in some places and circumstances, more fiction than fact. Our access to the Internet, email, cellular technology, and other digital platforms is subject to many restrictions and pricing tactics. Making it freer is a mission of need, urgency, and patriotism.

In 2018, I was a key player in the effort in California to protect Net Neutrality when wildfires here showed even first-responders were becoming casualties of coverage curbs and messaging caps and fees imposed by some carriers. I took a how-to lesson from the can-do advocacy of Ms. Sohn to bring Democrats, independents, Republicans, and others together to enact new safeguards.

In 2020, I earned my college degree, in both political science and theater arts (what a combination, right?). I was able to complete my study during the period of COVID precautions because of online courses in which I participated through digital technology. Millions of educators and students like me have a stake in broadband access that is unfettered, unfiltered, and inexpensive or free to help us achieve our aspirations to improve skills and serve others.

I live on the Eastside of L.A., a metropolis renowned for instant access to news and entertainment. But near me, broadband coverage is unstable. We still have much to do. ¡Vamos! Let’s get to it. I urge you to confirm Gigi Sohn to the FCC.

Sincerely,

Rafael Chagoya, Chair, EAPD Veterans Committee, for 1,000 club members
December 9, 2021

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
The United States Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
Chairman, Senate Subcommittee on
Communications, Media, and Broadband
The United States Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation
The United States Senate
Washington, DC

The Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member, Senate Subcommittee on
Communications, Media, and Broadband
The United States Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Chairmen Cantwell and Luján, and Ranking Members Wicker and Thune,

As the CEO of one of the few minority-owned-and-managed media companies in the country, I offer my full support for Gigi Sohn’s confirmation to be FCC Commissioner and urge the Senate Commerce Committee to confirm her nomination without hesitation.

Latino-owned Fuse Media is a multicultural focused, multiplatform entertainment company that serves its millennial and Gen-Z audience through a portfolio of streaming and television brands. With a mandate to keep inclusion and representation at the forefront of all creative and business decisions, I am proud to state that 100% of Fuse original series include Latinos and people of color. But we cannot do this job alone and, as a champion of diversity and inclusion in media and media ownership, Ms. Sohn has proven herself to be a much-needed advocate for communities that continue to be underrepresented in media, despite their prevalence in society.

We know that media plays a critical role in the way we perceive ourselves and others, yet underrepresented communities still struggle to find content that genuinely, accurately, and respectfully reflects their cultures and experiences. While U.S. Census data show Latinos comprising nearly 20% of the US population, the most recent Annenberg Inclusion Initiative study revealed that across media, only about 5% of speaking or named characters during 2019 featured a Hispanic or Latino actor. Many of those roles tend to reinforce negative stereotypes.

It therefore is imperative that smaller, independent media companies committed to equal and positive presentation of underrepresented minorities are given room and resources to thrive in an increasingly consolidated media landscape. Ms. Sohn has proven her commitment to ensuring such equity.
Fuse Media believes that audiences and consumers will benefit from Gigi Sohn’s confirmation as FCC Commissioner. Her commitment to diversity of ownership and viewpoints, along with her support for independent voices, will allow entertainment providers and companies of all sizes to be on a more level playing field, ultimately creating opportunities for more representation and inclusion in media.

Sincerely,

Miguel Roggero
Chief Executive Officer

cc:
Senator Amy Klobuchar  Senator Roy Blunt
Senator Richard Blumenthal  Senator Ted Cruz
Senator Brian Schatz  Senator Deb Fischer
Senator Ed Markey  Senator Jerry Moran
Senator Gary Peters  Senator Dan Sullivan
Senator Tammy Baldwin  Senator Marsha Blackburn
Senator Tammy Duckworth  Senator Todd Young
Senator Jon Tester  Senator Mike Lee
Senator Kyrsten Sinema  Senator Ron Johnson
Senator Jacky Rosen  Senator Shelley Moore Capito
Senator John Hickenlooper  Senator Rick Scott
Senator Raphael Warnock  Senator Cynthia Lummis
December 11, 2021

Hon. Maria Cantwell
Hart Senate Office Building, 511
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

I write to you today to support the nomination of Gigi Sohn for a seat on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). And I urge you to vote to confirm her, an exceptionally well-qualified team member and leader, to this important post of public service.

As a resident of Washington State for 15 years, I know equity in broadband access has wide support among my fellow Washingtonians.

It matters that Sohn is a proven champion for accessible, affordable broadband access for ALL Americans, including rural communities, Native people, seniors, and low-income residents. And I greatly appreciate your recent support for the Emergency Educational Connections Act as part of the American Rescue Plan. As we also know, those affected by technology access challenges include K-12 students. From your recent remarks: “The COVID crisis has made it crystal clear: functioning broadband is absolutely necessary for every American home.”

Additionally, after recent back-tracking by the FCC on consumer privacy and safeguards, we need a knowledgeable Commissioner who understands information technology and can guide sustainable federal standards that allow more people to enjoy the benefits of modern communication.

It concerns me that some opponents of this stellar nominee, whose hard work for non-discrimination in content distribution (including conservatives) and broadband access is second to none, might overlook her decades of leadership and focus instead on factors extraneous to her outstanding capabilities in an effort to disqualify her from public service.

It is fitting and customary to ask, for a position of this significance, if the President has chosen well. Yes, and in this case, he has chosen the best. This opportunity to serve in a post befitting her credentials is not only a smart and exceptional placement for Gigi Sohn to advance Americans’ common good, but also to show that Senate evaluation of key personnel will not be subject to delay and formidable talent will not be wasted.

Gigi Sohn is exactly the kind of well schooled, highly skilled nominee in whose service Washingtonians can take heart that their interests will be represented at the FCC. I urge you to approve her nomination and ensure she has a chance to serve in a role that makes our communities, state, and nation more connected with fewer barriers and at a lower cost to each of us.
In conclusion, as an LGBTQ advocate, I know, and I know you understand as well, that representation matters. Sohn would become the first openly LGBTQ person to serve in FCC history. More than 30 LGBTQ organizations have petitioned the Administration for her nomination.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I will be watching the progress of this nomination closely.

Sincerely,

Thomas Pitchford
625 H Street, NE #250
Washington, DC 20002
206-245-9609
thomas.pitchford@gmail.com
Dear Senator Sinema,

In your role on the Commerce Committee, you presently have pending the nomination of Gigi Sohn for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Sohn is a legal and policy leader on telecom and consumer access. She is a widely respected, practical problem-solver who has built bipartisan coalitions on data privacy and non-discrimination over content in cable and wireless communication. I urge you to approve Gigi Sohn for this important FCC post without delay.

As you know from experience, representation matters. Sohn would be the first-ever openly LGBT person to serve on the FCC. More than 30 organizations that work for equality in American life are supporting her breakthrough leadership at the commission.

For folks in Arizona like me, it matters that Sohn is a proven champion for accessible, affordable broadband access for ALL Americans, including rural communities, Native people, immigrants, seniors, and low-income residents.

After recent back-tracking by the FCC on consumer privacy and safeguards, we need a knowledgeable Commissioner who understands information technology and can guide sustainable federal standards that allow more people to enjoy the benefits of modern communication.

For a position of this significance, it’s worth asking if the President has chosen well. Absolutely, and in this case, the White House has selected THE best. This opportunity to serve in a post befitting her credentials is not only a smart and exceptional placement for Gigi Sohn to advance Americans’ common good, but also to show that Senate evaluation of key personnel will not be subject to delay and formidable talent will not be wasted.

It concerns me that some opponents of this stellar nominee, whose hard work for non-discrimination in content distribution (including conservatives) and broadband access is second to none, might overlook her decades of leadership and focus instead on factors extraneous to her outstanding capabilities in an effort to disqualify her from public service.

Gigi Sohn is exactly the kind of well schooled, highly skilled nominee in whose service my own family and others in Arizona can take heart that our interests will be represented at the FCC. I urge you to approve her nomination and ensure she has a chance to serve in a role that makes our communities, state, and nation more connected with fewer barriers and at a lower cost to each of us.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I will be watching the progress of this nomination closely.

Sincerely,
Ravi Shah, MD MPH MBA
CEA, Southern Arizona AIDS Foundation
Member, TUSD Governing Board
3380 E. via Golondrina
Tucson, AZ 85716
520-261-3611
ravishah516@gmail.com
January 3, 2022

Sen. Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
425 Hart Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sen. Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

We write to express our support for Ms. Gigi Sohn to be a commissioner at the FCC. We have each served as the Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau at the FCC. We are fully familiar with the responsibilities of that Bureau at the FCC, its authorities, and the important role FCC commissioners play in ensuring that first responders and the public can communicate reliably and effectively, especially in emergencies.

Based on our knowledge and experience with the public safety communications role of the FCC, our knowledge of FCC Commissioner nominee Gigi Sohn, and our work and dedication to make the public safer, we enthusiastically recommend that you confirm Gigi Sohn to serve as an FCC Commissioner.

Ms. Sohn’s years of advocacy in support of the FCC ensuring that our first responders have the reliable, resilient, and secure communications resources they need, and that public safety communications be given the priority they deserve given their criticality to mitigate harm, reflect her qualifications for the job. We know and appreciate that Ms. Sohn has been focused for a long time on what the FCC must do to make the public safer. She advocates that even as technology changes, it is of the highest priority for the FCC to use the authority it has to ensure that first responders have the communications support that they need, and that the public can reach help in an emergency over the vital commercial networks that the FCC regulates. She views these technology changes as opportunities to further facilitate emergency communications.

The Committee need look no further than its own proceedings to see Ms. Sohn express her commitment in this area, her appreciation of these concerns, and her advocacy of the importance of effective and reliable communications for first responders and for the public in emergencies. For example, on July 25, 2013, Ms. Sohn testified to this Committee:
“Public safety rules must ensure that emergency services like 9-1-1 and geolocation technologies continue to help first responders offer emergency care, regardless of whether the network that the customer uses is wireless or wireline, copper or fiber.”¹

“[T]he moments in which the public relies upon emergency services like 9-1-1 are literally life-or-death, and it is crucial that policymakers implement rules that maintain the public safety components of the phone network.” ²

Ms. Sohn’s views and advocacy to this Committee in 2013 of the criticality of public safety communications to the FCC’s mission, first responders and the public, also was clearly reflected in her recent testimony to the Committee in connection with her nomination to the Commission. She outlined her views in responding to Questions for the Record (QFRs):

“I would seek to ensure that every rulemaking, adjudication and decision of the Commission considers the potential implications for public safety. In particular, the Commission must ensure that police, firefighters and other first responders have access to the resources they need — especially in times of crisis.”³

She testified specifically about ensuring that no interference with public safety communications will be tolerated: “As a first priority, I would seek to ensure that public safety communications cannot be blocked or throttled.”⁴

Likewise, she cited the importance of ensuring that first responders have “adequate and secure spectrum...”; “robust communications networks...[reliable] during national disasters or terrorist attacks”; “network reliability and resiliency”; and her commitment to “consult regularly with law enforcement, firefighters, EMTs and other first responders to ensure that the unique needs of each community are met.” She cited the illegal use of contraband cell phones by incarcerated individuals as a law enforcement concern that she would work to address “consistent with the FCC’s statutory authority.”⁵

Each of us believe that Ms. Sohn, as a commissioner, would be a strong advocate for the public safety and homeland security communications policies and initiatives that are critical to the American people and first responders. We are deeply familiar with that mission and the important role that the FCC plays. Confirming Ms. Sohn would enable her to bring her understanding, prioritization, and commitment to these issues to the Commission. It is not only our words, but her own words as well, that speak to her understanding of this, long before she was nominated for this role.

¹ [Link to source]
² Ibid.
³ Questions for the Record, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, “Nominations of Gigi Sohn, to be a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission; Alan Davidson, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, DOC; Viquar Ahmad, to be Assistant Secretary for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, DOC; and Jed Kolko, to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Economic Affairs, DOC” (Dec. 1, 2021).
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
We urge the Committee to confirm Gigi Sohn expeditiously so she can get to work on the important mission Congress has charged the FCC with advancing. She is someone we believe will be a strong, effective, and knowledgeable advocate for the public’s safety as an FCC Commissioner.

Jamie Barnett, RDML, USN (Retired) David S. Turetsky
January 4, 2022

Sen. Maria Cantwell  
Chair  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
425 Hart Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Sen. Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
512 Dirksen Bldg.  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker:

I am writing to encourage you to support the confirmation of Gigi Sohn as a commissioner at the FCC. I worked closely with Ms. Sohn for three years while I was the Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Bureau. I know her to be a patriot, a strong supporter of law enforcement and an advocate for public safety professionals. She would be an outstanding commissioner and bring useful consumer and community focused perspective to the FCC.

While at the FCC, Ms. Sohn and I worked together on several important issues, and in every item, Ms. Sohn brought valuable public voice and understanding into the record. During that timeframe the Commission laid the groundwork for Next Generation 9-1-1, closed the indoor location gap for 9-1-1, demonstrably improved emergency alerting, brought FirstNet across the finish line, and improved the resiliency of communications supporting consumers and communities after disasters.

In addition, during our shared tenure, the Commission closely examined net neutrality and privacy policies for telecommunications. Ms. Shon’s background and understanding of technology issues was extremely useful. She helped my bureau gain access to technologists, privacy policy experts and security
experts to ensure that our work fully evaluated the costs and benefits of cybersecurity through a consumer lens. She recognized cybersecurity and supply chain risk for the challenges they have become and facilitated participation of cybersecurity professionals in our FACAs and other meetings.

Moreover, during my time at the Commission, encryption policy for telecommunications was an area without clear government, industry, or consumer consensus. Across the multiple federal agencies that were looking into encryption from a policy perspective, there were proponents for strong end-to-end encryption policies for commercial communication encryption (no backdoors) that also advocated for expanded Lawful Intercept capabilities built into future standards. Ms. Sohn took no position on encryption policy or encryption matters before us. On the contrary, she was extremely helpful in bringing tech-savvy professionals before the Bureau to provide useful background on both sides of the issue. Her support for the privacy rights of citizens has always been balanced with strong support for National Security and Public Safety objectives.

Tension continues regarding the appropriate national policy for commercial encryption. The Zero Trust architecture approach adopted by DoD, NSA and ONDI leaders includes strong end-to-end encryption of data to address cybersecurity threats. Many in law enforcement are concerned about potential loss of Lawful Intercept access from Zero Trust implementation, while consumer advocates remain concerned over loss of privacy in a fully developed Internet of Things world, and cybersecurity professionals seek to eliminate vulnerabilities from encryption implementation that supports third party privileged access. Congress can clarify FCC’s role in addressing these competing priorities as 5G enables further expansion of our connected wireless lives. As a commissioner, I have every confidence that Ms. Sohn would be an impartial jurist who will ask tough questions, help fill in public testimony, support transparency and vote her conscious based on the law and the record before her. I believe her decisions will balance consumer, citizen and community interests with law enforcement and national security priorities consistent with statutory guidance from congress.

Another notable example of Ms. Sohn’s decision-making process can be found in her support for the FCC’s effort to recompete and seat a new telephone number portability administrator. Incumbent lobbying efforts attempted to derail this effort and Ms. Sohn’s sage counsel helped us successfully navigate the policy challenges in a manner that improved service, lowered cost, and preserved lawful intercept capabilities. As the Congress looks forward to
addressing the privacy and security challenges of a converged 5G communications and cloud landscape, Data Portability will certainly be a concern. Ms. Sohn’s number portability experience will ensure that security and privacy expert voices as well as consumers and communities viewpoints are heard and well considered. My experience working with Ms. Sohn suggests that she will affirmatively seek inputs from both national security and law enforcement professionals and work with her colleagues to ensure that public safety is paramount for any decisions. She will be a useful witness before your committee to ensure that your deliberations benefit from a fulsome public record generated by the FCC.

In conclusion, Gigi Sohn has my strongest possible endorsement for your confirmation as a commissioner at the FCC. Invariably there will be issues where her vote may not be the one you would make, but you will always know that she is a straight shooter ready to fully articulate ‘the why’ behind her decision. I believe you will appreciate her candor as you make decisions in developing the FCC’s priorities.

David Simpson, Rear Admiral (ret.), USN
Former FCC Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau Chief
January 6, 2022

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell,

I am writing to urge swift action on the nomination of Gigi Sohn for Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Throughout her career, Gigi has been a staunch advocate for the expansion of affordable internet access. During the T-Mobile/Sprint merger, Sohn was a key ally in the fight to protect the jobs of the working families who ultimately ended up being harmed by the merger. She fights to ensure that working people and underrepresented communities are front and center in charting the course for an equitable communications and media ecosystem. Additionally, she supports constructive collaboration with states to ensure effective oversight of broadband services and infrastructure.

Gigi’s voice, experience, and expertise are just what the FCC needs during a period of increased federal investment in broadband networks and digital equity initiatives. She has demonstrated her commitment to consumers and workers in the telecommunications industry throughout her career in public interest advocacy and government service, and again demonstrated her expertise and strong credentials to be an FCC Commissioner at her December 1st, hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.
Gigi’s tireless advocacy for communications infrastructure that equitably serves all Americans has never been more important. I strongly urge you to swiftly advance the nomination of Gigi Sohn to serve as Commissioner of the FCC, as she is exactly the kind of leader we need at this watershed moment.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Christopher M. Shelton
President

Cc: Members of the U.S. Senate
Dear Senator Sinema:

I hope you are doing well and enjoying a healthy start to 2022. I am writing in support of President Biden’s nomination of Gigi Sohn to serve as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Arizona is ranked 36th in the nation for broadband coverage. 31 percent of Arizonans are either unserved or underserved. This is not only a rural challenge. For example, the Phoenix, Arizona neighborhood of Maryvale, a densely populated, urban area, is underserved, with two-thirds of households without Internet.

Throughout the pandemic, broadband access has proven to be a key infrastructure investment that Arizonans understand is vital for advancing our education, healthcare, and workforce development. ASU worked to ensure a seamless transition from in-person instruction to online delivery for all of our students at the onset of the pandemic by providing mobile hotspots and other technology, yet students in areas lacking broadband coverage were still challenged to access their classes. This was especially true for our students located on tribal lands.

Ms. Sohn’s number one priority is getting robust broadband everywhere, to rural and urban areas and to tribal lands. When she was at the FCC she worked closely with the Office of Native American Policy and with tribal leaders. She has been very supportive of legislative and policy efforts to expand broadband deployment on tribal lands and to give tribes more control over spectrum on tribal lands. This includes, among other things, extending the 2.5GHz tribal priority window.

Ms. Sohn has supported the broadband infrastructure bill (Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act), that requires states to provide funding to unserved areas first and then to underserved areas. Combined with funding from other bills passed by Congress in 2020 and 2021, there is a real opportunity to make enormous progress in closing the digital divide.

Ms. Sohn has a long history of reaching out to and sitting down with people who disagree with her position to try and find common ground. She has done so whether someone is from a different political party or from industry—even when doing so has put her at odds with some in the public interest community. I believe that Ms. Sohn is the best person to move the FCC forward and help close the digital divide.

I encourage you to support the nomination of Ms. Sohn to the open seat on the FCC to continue to advance our interests here in Arizona. As always, I am happy to speak with you further if you have questions or insights.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Crow
President
Dear Senator Sinema:

I hope you are doing well and enjoying a healthy start to 2022. I am writing in support of President Biden’s nomination of Gigi Sohn to serve as a Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

Arizona is ranked 36th in the nation for broadband coverage. 31 percent of Arizonans are either unserved or underserved. This is not only a rural challenge. For example, the Phoenix, Arizona neighborhood of Maryvale, a densely populated, urban area, is underserved, with two-thirds of households without Internet.

Throughout the pandemic, broadband access has proven to be a key infrastructure investment that Arizonans understand is vital for advancing our education, healthcare, and workforce development. As Arizona’s Research and Education Network the Sun Corridor Network (SCN) witnessed firsthand the difficulties in unserved and underserved communities as teachers and students sought to engage in education with insufficient capabilities. SCN worked diligently with schools, communities, and our university partners by providing mobile hotspots, wireless networking, and other technology, yet students in areas lacking broadband coverage were still challenged to access their classes. This was especially true on tribal lands.

Ms. Sohn’s number one priority is getting robust broadband everywhere, to rural and urban areas and to tribal lands. When she was at the FCC she worked closely with the Office of Native American Policy and with tribal leaders. She has been very supportive of legislative and policy efforts to expand broadband deployment on tribal lands and to give tribes more control over spectrum on tribal lands. This includes, among other things, extending the 2.5GHz tribal priority window.

Ms. Sohn has supported the broadband infrastructure bill (Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act), that requires states to provide funding to unserved areas first and then to underserved areas. Combined with funding from other bills passed by Congress in 2020 and 2021, there is a real opportunity to make enormous progress in closing the digital divide.

Ms. Sohn has a long history of reaching out to and sitting down with people who disagree with her position to try and find common ground. She has done so whether someone is from a different political party or from industry—even when doing so has put her at odds with some in the public interest community. I believe that Ms. Sohn is the best person to move the FCC forward and help close the digital divide.

I encourage you to support the nomination of Ms. Sohn to the open seat on the FCC to continue to advance our interests here in Arizona. As always, I am happy to speak with you further if you have questions or insights.

Sincerely,

Derek Masseth
Executive Director
Sun Corridor Network
January 14, 2022

Dear Senators Sinema and Kelly,

I write to express my support for Gigi Sohn to become a commissioner at the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Access to affordable, reliable communications services is crucial to Arizonans and Ms. Sohn has a distinguished career dedicated to advancing the availability and affordability of communications service so that we can all benefit from these transformational networks.

Arizona needs a fully functional FCC to help close the digital divide, particularly acute in our state. In eight of Arizona's fifteen counties, more than two-thirds of households lack access to high-speed broadband. Low-income families, Native Americans, and people of color are disproportionately disconnected, compounding grave inequalities that were made worse during the pandemic.

Broadband access is a significant problem for families living on reservations in Arizona. Tribes are some of the least connected communities in the United States, and eighteen percent of tribal reservation residents have no internet access at home. The 22 federally recognized Tribes in Arizona face unique connectivity challenges at a time when broadband access has proven essential for distance learning, telehealth appointments, meetings over video platforms, connecting to remote work, and much more.

For 20 years I served on the board of directors of the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to ensuring that all people in the U.S. have access to competitive, High-Performance Broadband regardless of where they live or who they are. Benton believes communication policy—rooted in the values of access, equity, and diversity—
has the power to deliver new opportunities and strengthen communities.

Since 2018, Ms. Sohn has served as the Benton Senior Fellow and Public Advocate. She is one of the nation's leading public advocates for open, affordable and democratic communications networks. For nearly thirty years, she has worked across the country, including Arizona, to defend and preserve the fundamental competition and innovation policies that have made broadband Internet access more ubiquitous, competitive, affordable, open and protective of user privacy.

The FCC is tasked with working with Arizona and its representatives to get ubiquitous, affordable and reliable communications services to our citizens. Ms. Sohn would be a knowledgeable partner in helping Arizonans and the country meet this challenge. I urge you and your colleagues in the Senate to support her confirmation to be a commissioner. Arizona and our Nation cannot wait any longer to have a fully functioning Commission. The Agency's mission is too important.

Sincerely,

Terry Goddard
January 18, 2022

Senator Maria Cantwell, Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roger Wicker, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

On behalf of Pride at Work, which represents LGBTQ+ union members and their allies, I write to strongly support Gigi Sohn for the role of Commissioner at the FCC and urge swift action on her nomination. Her meaningful leadership, dedication, and contributions cannot be overstated. She has been instrumental in the success of many FCC proceedings, including on competition, open internet, modernization of the Lifeline program, and adoption of strong privacy rules for broadband providers. Throughout her career, she has been a champion of workers and consumers.

Gigi Sohn has over 30 years of experience working on communications policy and has been an advocate for affordable internet access. She was a key ally of the labor movement in the fight to protect jobs during the T-Mobile/Sprint merger and supports efforts to hold broadband service providers accountable.

Pride at Work seeks full equality for LGBTQ+ workers in our workplaces and unions and works towards creating a Labor Movement that cherishes diversity, encourages openness, and ensures safety and dignity. Sohn has been a dedicated supporter of fast, affordable, and reliable broadband for all people, including the LGBTQ+ community, which is crucial for bridging the digital divide and ensuring full participation in social, economic, and political life.

Once confirmed, Gigi Sohn will be the first openly LGBTQ+ Commissioner of the FCC, and she will continue to be a staunch champion for workers and consumers. Sohn fully understands our complex telecommunications and media landscape, the importance of diversity and inclusion for all people, and will work diligently to ensure the views of the LGBTQ+ community are well represented in FCC decisions.

Gigi Sohn’s voice, experience, knowledge, and expertise are needed on the FCC as it tackles major issues in the years ahead. Hence, we urge you to act quickly to confirm Gigi Sohn.

Sincerely,

Jerame Davis
Executive Director
January 24, 2022

The Honorable María Cantwell  
Chair  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: The National Urban League’s Support for Sohn FCC Nomination

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Wicker,

As President and CEO of the National Urban League, and on behalf of its 91 affiliates in 37 states and the District of Columbia, I write to urge the committee to swiftly consider and work with Senate leadership to confirm Gigi B. Sohn to serve as a commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). As an historic civil rights organization that is dedicated to economic empowerment in order to elevate the standard of living in historically underrepresented urban communities, the National Urban League supports Sohn’s nomination and believes she will advance civil rights, digital equity, and economic empowerment for communities of color and other underserved communities.

Our country continues to face stark disparities in the availability and adoption of broadband. The consequences of this digital divide have been amplified by the increased reliance on high-speed internet access during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through our Lewis Latimer Plan for Digital Equity and Inclusion, the National Urban League has recommended that the FCC, the broader Biden-Harris Administration, and Congress address these issues through broadband buildout, an affordable broadband and devices benefit, digital education, improved utilization of the internet for critical government services, and increased opportunities for communities of color to benefit from the economic prosperity of this digital age.¹

If confirmed, Sohn’s 30 years of experience on these issues at the Commission, as a former staff member and an advocate and academic, will make her well-equipped to tackle these goals. Ms. Sohn has an exhibited commitment to equity that will benefit consumers and communities of color, as we seek to close the digital and economic divide. In particular, she has expressed interest in boosting media diversity and ownership, including through expansion of the broadcast incubator program beyond radio and via a reevaluation of the FCC’s minority ownership rules as part of its 2022 Quadrennial Review.

At a time when the United States has committed $65 billion to expanding affordable broadband access and programs, including the Affordable Connectivity Program, we need a full and active commission that is committed to ensuring that this funding is implemented equitably and with informed guidance from a broad range of stakeholders. The National Urban League sincerely urges you to advance Sohn’s nomination quickly through the Senate.

For more information, please contact Joi Chaney, Executive Director of the Washington Bureau and Senior Vice President for Policy and Advocacy at jchaney@nul.org.

Sincerely,

Marc. H. Morial
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Urban League
February 1, 2022

SUPPORT SWIFT CONFIRMATION OF SOHN TO FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION AND BEDOYA TO FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Commerce Committee Chair Cantwell:

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 230 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, and UnidosUS, the nation’s largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization, we write to convey our strong support for confirmation of Gigi B. Sohn and Alvaro M. Bedoya to serve as commissioners, respectively, of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC). We urge the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation to quickly report both nominations to the full Senate favorably and the Senate to promptly confirm both nominees.

Our coalition is committed to ensuring that media, telecommunications, competition, consumer protection, and privacy policy affirms and extends our nation’s longstanding commitment to civil rights. Both the FCC and FTC have been operating without a full complement of commissioners since the start of the Biden/Harris administration. The need for swift action on these nominations is therefore critical as further delay will harm implementation of key civil rights priorities.

The FCC is currently implementing key provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, including the new Affordable Connectivity Program, as well as the directive to prohibit digital discrimination. To ensure our nation’s broadcasting industry is diverse, competitive and serves local communities, the FCC must act quickly to complete the 2018 Quadrennial Review and initiate and complete the 2022 Quadrennial Review in a timely manner. The FCC must also take further steps to address the dysfunctional market and unjust practices in incarcerated communications and implement Congress’ directive to collect equal employment opportunity data in broadcasting.

The FTC’s responsibility to protect and enhance competition and consumer protection is particularly important as much of our economy moves online. With a full complement of commissioners, the FTC can better enforce existing law against online discrimination based on protected characteristics with respect to housing, access to credit, education, employment, and public accommodations; enforce unfair and deceptive practices in the data economy; and provide for algorithmic transparency and fairness in automated decisions.

Both Ms. Sohn and Professor Bedoya are exemplary nominees for their respective positions and should be swiftly confirmed. Throughout her career, Ms. Sohn has dedicated herself to
the public interest, whether through her service on the Presidential Advisory Commission on the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters, her advocacy for policies that promote diversity and competition in the non-profit sector, or her time at the FCC as a senior counselor to the chairman. An influential scholar focused on the principle that privacy is a civil right, Professor Bedoya is exactly the leader our country needs right now at the FTC to address the many issues relating to technology that marginalized communities face. He was notably one of the first to warn of the risks of facial recognition technology, including by comprehensively pointing out the technology’s biases with race, gender, and age. The Leadership Conference also worked closely with Professor Bedoya in urging Google to ban online ads for predatory payday loans, which the company ultimately did.

Both nominees have shown they will establish a collaborative process and dialogue with the civil rights community as well as consult with the community members who are often left out of FCC and FTC deliberations, including people of color, people with disabilities, low-income communities, immigrants, incarcerated individuals, and other marginalized communities. In addition, both nominees would bring diversity to their respective institutions. If confirmed, Ms. Sohn would be the commission’s first openly LGBTQ commissioner. As a naturalized citizen born in Peru, Professor Bedoya would be one of the few Latinos to serve as commissioner on the FTC.

Ms. Sohn and Professor Bedoya are highly qualified, possess deep knowledge of the challenges faced by disadvantaged populations, and have a demonstrated commitment to collaboration with civil rights stakeholders. The civil rights agenda at the FCC and FTC requires rapid, focused attention. For these reasons, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation should move quickly to report these nominees favorably to the full Senate and the Senate should swiftly confirm them. Should you have any questions, please contact Leadership Conference Media/Telecommunications Task Force Co-Chair Cheryl Leanza, United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry, at eleanza@alhmail.com, or Anita Banerji, Leadership Conference Media/Tech Senior Program Director at banerji@civilrights.org or Bertram Lee, Jr., Media/Tech Counsel, at lee@civilrights.org.

Sincerely,

Wade Henderson
Interim President and CEO

Janet Murguía
President and CEO, UnidosUS
Dear Senator Sinema:

I am a lifelong Democrat. Before relocating to Arizona, I worked for the California Democratic Party for a number of years doing field organizing, trained and taught grassroots activists on voter registration, how to use the voter file, phone bank and walk precincts, primarily in the rural areas of California. Additionally, I enlisted many of my friends to work on your election campaign.

I am writing to support the nomination of an extremely well-versed legal and policy expert and widely respected, practical problem-solver and bipartisan coalition-builder Gigi Sohn for the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

For Arizonans like me, it matters that Sohn is a proven champion for accessible, affordable broadband access for ALL Americans, including rural communities, Native people, seniors, and low-income residents.

After recent back-tracking by the FCC on consumer privacy and safeguards, we need a knowledgeable Commissioner who understands information technology and can guide sustainable federal standards that allow more people to enjoy the benefits of modern communication.

It concerns me that some opponents of this stellar nominee, whose hard work for non-discrimination in content distribution (including conservatives) and broadband access is second to none, might overlook her decades of leadership and focus instead on factors extraneous to her outstanding capabilities in an effort to disqualify her from public service.

It is fitting and customary to ask, for a position of this significance, if the President has chosen well. Yes, and in this case, he has chosen the best. This opportunity to serve in a post befitting her credentials is not only a smart and exceptional placement for Gigi Sohn to advance Americans’ common good, but also to show that Senate evaluation of key personnel will not be subject to delay and formidable talent will not be wasted.

Gigi Sohn is exactly the kind of well-schooled, highly skilled nominee in whose service Arizonans can take heart that our interests will be represented at the FCC. I urge you to approve her nomination and ensure she has a chance to serve in a role that makes our communities, state, and nation more connected with fewer barriers and at a lower cost to each of us.

I have attached Gigi’s bio below. Please let me know if you have any question. I will be watching the progress of this nomination closely.

Sincerely,

Martha Daniels Gamez
1659 West Mariquita Street
Green Valley, AZ 85622
209-604-2275
gamezm01@att.net

FYI: Gigi Sohn’s bio here ...
http://gigisohn.com/bio/
Open Letter to the U.S. Senate: Confirm Gigi Sohn to the FCC

As a media entrepreneur and the only Black owner/operator of “Big 4” network affiliated broadcast TV stations in the U.S., as well as the owner of traditional and digital media platforms, including The Weather Channel, TheGrio.com, Local Now, JusticeCentral.TV, Comedy.TV, Cars.TV, HBCUGo.TV, Pets.TV, Sports.TV, Recipe.TV and many others, I take very seriously the role of the Federal Communications Commission in promoting diversity, supporting localism, and protecting freedom of speech. That is why I am supporting Gigi Sohn to be confirmed as an FCC Commissioner.

It should not be the case in 2021 that Black Americans, who comprise approximately 12% of the U.S. population, own a majority interest in less than 2% of full-power broadcast TV stations. I should not be the only Black American who owns and operates major network affiliated stations. The FCC is charged with promoting diversity of ownership and viewpoints yet has fallen short of achieving a truly diverse media landscape. Gigi Sohn understands and is a champion against this inequity.

Over many years, she has worked nonstop to promote greater competition and more minority ownership in broadcasting. As a commissioner, she would have the tools to improve ownership diversity among FCC licensees. As the first openly LGBTQ person in history nominated to the FCC, Gigi truly understands on a personal level why diversity and inclusion for all Americans matters. Please note that Mignon Clyburn, the first Black woman ever to serve as acting Chair of the FCC, understands the job extremely well and supports Gigi’s confirmation, and so do I.

As an owner of local broadcast TV stations, I understand the critical importance to the health and safety of our citizens, as well as to our democracy, of robust local broadcast news organizations. According to the Pew Charitable Trusts, most Americans prefer to get their local news from local broadcasters. The FCC is supposed to promote localism but often fails to protect local broadcast affiliates against abuses from much larger companies and industries. Gigi Sohn understands this innately. For years, she has advocated for restoring a more reasonable balance of power between local broadcasters and major conglomerates in the communications ecosystem. She will use her seat on the FCC to bring the “local” back to localism.

Finally, as someone who speaks out against injustice, racism, unfairness, and corruption wherever and whenever I see it, I value our American freedom of
speech, and Gigi Sohn will help protect our rights as American citizens. Whether fighting for an open Internet or for the free speech rights of conservatives with whom she disagrees, Gigi advocates for all people to speak and be heard. That is why multiple conservatives who disagree with her on a lot of issues publicly support Gigi’s confirmation to the FCC. They have seen her fight tirelessly for diversity and freedom of speech. The Senate should act quickly to confirm Gigi Sohn to the FCC. She will do a great job for our country!!!

Continued Success,

Byron Allen ■
Policy Versus Politics: Gigi Sohn’s Years of Support for Empowerment and Inclusion Deserve Confirmation

By Mignon Clyburn published November 18, 2021

Claims that Gigi Sohn would ‘actively deter minority media ownership’ are fundamentally false

Because we live in an increasingly divisive world, it is more important than ever before to disagree agreeably. That is the only way to achieve the best solutions. Unfortunately, when it comes to President Biden’s nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission, disagreements over policy have turned personal and political, far removed from disagreements over public policy.

Claims that Gigi Sohn would “actively deter minority media ownership” are fundamentally false. I have worked with Gigi for many years and she has been a champion for diversity in media ownership and tech before, during and after that time, including as a top adviser to chairman Tom Wheeler. She also worked long and hard with me and within the Federal Communications Commission to address the outrageous and excessive prison phone rates that regularly harm so many communities of color.
I am not alone in my support for Gigi. The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights led a coalition of some 25 civil rights and civil liberties organizations in a joint letter saying that “throughout her career, Ms. Sohn has dedicated herself to the public interest.” The groups pointed to her long-time “advocacy for policies that promote diversity and competition.”

“She will establish a collaborative process and dialogue with the civil rights community, as well as consult with the community members who are often left out of commission deliberations,” they said, and they also recognize that she would make history as the FCC’s first openly LGBTQ commissioner.

Gigi’s support of strong policies prohibiting discrimination by internet services providers should be praised, and not belittled. Her opposition to media and telecommunications consolidation and any evasion of media ownership rules that provide fewer, not more, opportunities for minority ownership should be commended, and not ridiculed. It defies reason that Gigi’s support of competition and greater entry into the media and telecommunications industry by those traditionally shut out would be labeled as “anti-business.” Throughout her entire career, Gigi has helped underrepresented voices in industry gain access to communications platforms, be they broadcasting, cable or the internet. This isn’t “anti-business,” it’s pro-competition, pro-inclusion, and pro-opportunity.

Also: Gigi Sohn’s Confirmation to the FCC Will Undermine Minority Media Growth and Achievement

Often overlooked is Gigi’s leadership in hiring and promoting people of color into the field of communications policy. When she left Public Knowledge in 2013, nearly one-third of the staff were people of color. She brought two of those people to the Federal Communications Commission and another staffer of color is now the successful CEO of Public Knowledge. I expect that if confirmed, her staff at the FCC will be similarly diverse.

Have Gigi and I agreed on every issue? The answer is a thunderous no. But like you, I pick my friends and stay loyal to my family not because we see eye to eye on every single issue, but because we believe in many of the same things.

The Multicultural Media and Telecom and Internet Council said it best: “Gigi is a leading public advocate for open, affordable and democratic communications networks” and the Senate should confirm her without delay.
The U.S. Senate Should Act Expeditiously to Confirm Gigi Sohn as FCC Commissioner

by Gary Shapiro
President and CEO, CTA

Good government depends on the leadership of good people – individuals who are committed to principles over partisanship, open to diverse perspectives and dedicated to acting in the public interest. As the U.S. Senate considers a nominee for Commissioner of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), I urge them to confirm a candidate who embodies these qualities: Gigi Sohn.

Gigi is a pragmatic problem solver who understands what it takes to make innovation thrive. During a distinguished and multi-decade career in technology, media and telecommunications policy, she has served as a consumer advocate, public servant and academic. In each of these roles, she has earned the respect of industry, civil society groups and Republicans and Democrats alike – a true feat in these hyper-partisan times. In short: she is extraordinarily qualified for this position.

We need an FCC Commissioner who will ask critical questions of both industry leaders and government counterparts and truly listen to the answers, even when they are at odds with personal views. At times, that may mean that Gigi takes positions that conflict with the priorities of the consumer technology industry. But that’s a price we should all be willing to accept for a commissioner with deep integrity, knowledge and skill.

A look at her track record makes it clear that Gigi has always been an ardent defender of the principles that define our democracy – free speech and robust, substantive debate. Take for example, the decade-old debate over the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and PROTECT IP Act (PIPA). Gigi rightly recognized the massive harm these bills would have to free expression and U.S. innovation and successfully advocated for their defeat. Had these bills passed, they would have allowed the removal of an array of websites containing user-generated content. Over the
The issues facing the FCC today are too great to allow for any further delay in the nomination process. Since the start of the pandemic, millions of Americans have relied on high-speed broadband for work, school and health care. As these technologies become more integrated into our daily lives, that number will only grow. A strong U.S. economy and America's global leadership depend on a full slate of Commissioners.

It is time to put aside politics and come together in support of a nominee for FCC Commissioner with a proven track record of effectiveness, open-mindedness and principled decision making. Senators, the time to act is now. I urge you to vote to confirm Gigi Sohn as FCC Commissioner.

*Gary Shapiro is president and CEO of the Consumer Technology Association, the U.S. trade association representing more than 1,500 consumer technology companies, and a New York Times best-selling author. His views are his own.*
[IS] OPINIONS
Politics
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Gigi Sohn – An FCC Voice For Competition And New Entrants

Posted to Politics
(https://insidesources.com/category/politics/) January 02, 2022 by Preston Padden
(https://insidesources.com/author/preston-padden/)

Gigi Sohn will be an important and necessary voice for competition and disruptive new market entrants at the FCC. I know because I am a free market, small government advocate who has worked with, and sometimes against, Gigi for more than 35 years.

As president of the Association of Independent TV Stations, I represented pro-competitive new entrants in TV broadcasting. In those days, the only thing the established network TV stations and the cable systems (at the time local monopolies) could agree on was a mutual desire to snuff out the pesky new independent stations. Seeking allies, I turned to Gigi and she was a tireless partner in helping to keep the independent stations alive – a very good thing for competition and for consumer choice.

Next, I went to work for Rupert Murdoch as President of Network Distribution for the upstart Fox Broadcasting Company and as Rupert’s head American lobbyist. Like the independent stations that became affiliates of the new Fox Network, Fox itself was an upstart, disruptive new force in television. And the three old networks tried every trick in the marketplace and regulatory books to kill us in the cradle. Again, it was Gigi to whom I turned to help us fight our battles at the FCC. While no fan of Rupert (as he is unlikely to be a fan of Gigi’s), Gigi understood that the establishment of a fourth free-over-the-air television network was a longstanding FCC public interest goal. She was a tireless and effective advocate for Fox Broadcasting Company against entrenched industry forces.

After leaving Fox, I joined The Walt Disney Company – hardly a new market entrant. But when AOL (which at the time was the internet) merged with Time Warner, even powerful Disney found itself facing a potentially anti-competitive gatekeeper. One of our biggest content competitors now controlled a monopoly gateway to millions of American homes. Our well-founded fear was that the merged company would use that monopoly gateway to favor its own content. Again, I turned to Gigi for help. Even though Disney was an industry giant, she understood the threat to competition and was an indispensable ally.

I strongly disagree with Gigi on some issues. We have fought vigorously on many industry panels over more than 35 years. But I never found Gigi to be disagreeable. She is a great human being and an effective advocate for competition and new market entrants – all in the service of consumers.

So, the question is, should Gigi’s appointment to be a Commissioner of the FCC be confirmed. I say – emphatically – yes.

Established market entities deserve a voice in public policy debates – period, full stop. But there is a public interest need for the FCC also to have a strong and effective voice for competition and disruptive new market entrants. That is true whether one is a conservative, a progressive, or a libertarian. Based on my personal
experience working with Gigi in multiple regulatory battles, she is that voice.

About the Author

Preston Padden (https://insidesources.com/author/preston-padden/)
Preston Padden is a former media executive and principal of Boulder Thinking, LLC. He wrote this for InsideSources.com.
More from Inside Sources
A fully staffed FCC is important for rural broadband: Bloomfield

Shirley Bloomfield  •  Jan 5, 2022 10:18am

Bloomfield says NTCA is ready to work on rural broadband issues with the FCC and believes Sohn would add great value to these efforts. (Getty Images)

Yesterday, President Joe Biden renominated Gigi Sohn to be a member of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a term of five years from July 1, 2021. Although there have been some calls for Biden to withdraw her nomination, the president has sent her name back to the Senate.

To continue the good work already underway and to take the next steps necessary, I urge Congress to move forward with the nomination of Sohn as the fifth commissioner to the FCC. Her confirmation is critical to ensuring all hands will be on deck as the FCC considers the future of universal service and builds upon its efforts to get and keep every American connected.

We are on the cusp of a broadband deployment revolution, with billions of dollars dedicated by Congress to expand connectivity to all Americans and close the digital divide. While these funds will go to a variety of agencies, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is poised to play a key role in overseeing several new programs and coordinating on others – and all of this in addition to the essential work it already does to promote universal service.

Leveraging these FCC programs combined with a mix of community commitment, private capital, and entrepreneurial spirit, local broadband providers have already done yeoman’s work connecting their neighbors and communities near rural consumers with high-speed internet.

In fact, the latest survey results of NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association shows that providers are offering fiber connectivity to nearly 75% of their customers and to nearly all of the schools, libraries and medical centers in their communities. But there is plenty of work left to be done to reach those lacking service and to sustain robust and affordable services for those fortunate enough to have them already.

RELATED: Biden taps Rosenworcel, Davidson to fill key telecom posts at FCC, NTIA
The list of critical projects on the FCC’s docket is long. In addition to its ongoing role in overseeing our nation’s mission of universal service, the FCC’s charge includes finishing the mapping effort required to prioritize areas of need. The FCC can also be an expert resource for states to ensure funds are directed to providers capable of delivering on their promises and collaborate with other agencies in seeking solutions to our current telecom supply chain challenges and workforce development concerns. And, with years of universal service experience under its belt, the FCC is well-positioned to help make sure our nation leverages the expertise of community-based providers in fulfilling broadband visions for millions of Americans.

NTCA is ready and eager to work on these issues with the FCC, and we believe a Commissioner Sohn would add great value to these efforts. Throughout her career, whether as senior staff at the FCC or working with various organizations and in academia, Sohn has consistently demonstrated thoughtfulness and pragmatism in approaching difficult questions and a willingness to engage with stakeholders of all kinds to discuss and debate these issues. Her understanding and expertise of telecommunications policy, together with her long-standing interest in promoting access to affordable and advanced communications services, position her well to consider the issues that will come before the Commission.

Successful federal telecommunications policy – and the connectivity of all Americans – depends, in part, upon effective leadership and pragmatic decision-making at the FCC. We encourage the Senate to confirm Sohn to the FCC as we enter a new and exciting chapter in efforts to close the digital divide in rural areas.

Shirley Bloomfield is chief executive officer of NTCA–The Rural Broadband Association, representing nearly 850 independent telecommunications companies that are leading innovation in rural and small-town America.

Industry Voices are opinion columns written by outside contributors–often industry experts or analysts–who are invited to the conversation by FierceWireless staff. They do not necessarily represent the opinions of FierceWireless.

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Editor's Corner: C-band 5G fiasco - this is what $80B buys?

Monica Alleven  •  Jan 4, 2022 12:45pm
In this critical moment for digital access, we must confirm Gigi Sohn for the FCC

BY GLORIA TRISTANI, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 01/08/22 09:01 AM EST

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

Today, as millions of children are being sent home from school yet again due to the omicron variant sweeping the nation, it has never been more critical to bring everyone the benefits of broadband — high-quality high-speed internet access.

Now thanks to the billions committed in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act passed by Congress and signed by President Biden, we have the best opportunity in a generation to actually close the digital divide for good.

But this essential work cannot happen without the swift confirmation of Gigi Sohn as a commissioner with the Federal Communications Commission.

As a commissioner on the FCC at the turn of the century and the last Latino to hold that position, I was concerned that Latinos and other people of color were being left behind by the telecommunications revolution.

I foresaw that the internet would be the new public square — that it would be critical to every facet of American life, from employment to education, healthcare and more. That’s why I fought for funding to subsidize internet connections in schools and libraries in low-income areas, to ensure that Latinos and other disadvantaged communities were not left behind.
In this critical moment for digital access, we must confirm Gigi Sohn for the FCC | TheHill

I’ve known Sohn in my time as a commissioner and as a fellow advocate for the public interest. I have no doubt that she will be an ally to those focused on equity, justice and economic fairness. She has a strong track record of promoting policies that make internet access more affordable for the poor, people of color and people living on tribal lands.

The numbers continue to show that Latinos, Black people and Native Americans are less likely to have quality home internet connections than white people, even when controlling for income and other factors. To eliminate ongoing racial, ethnic, geographic and income-based disparities in internet access, we need a fully functional FCC.

The longer we wait for this seat to be filled, the longer these disparities will linger. The poorest communities are often the most disadvantaged due to a lack of investment by broadband carriers in their neighborhoods, and plenty of data shows that this regularly corresponds along racial and ethnic lines.

For example, a study by the University of Southern California found that Black neighborhoods in Los Angeles County were being skipped by broadband companies on the latest upgrades. A study by the Greenlining Institute found that historical housing discrimination parallels closely with broadband deployment in Oakland. So it should come as no surprise that those two little girls forced to do homework on fast food parking lot Wi-Fi that caught national attention were Latina. Ending this digital redlining will require the FCC, much in the same way the government has had to in the past, to prohibit such discrimination.

During President Trump’s administration, the FCC deregulated the broadband industry so the agency is unable to address today’s worsening inequality of access. President Biden has made clear his desire to restore the agency to its core mission and to carry out his infrastructure agenda to connect all people to high-quality high-speed broadband access. That important work will not begin until the Senate confirms Sohn.

At present, the FCC is deadlocked at a two-two party-line split. The two democratic commissioners believe the FCC must return to regulating broadband access on behalf of the public. Biden’s FCC Chair, Jessica Rosenworcel, has been adamant about the need to eliminate the “homework gap” so that we no longer see kids using fast food Wi-Fi to do their school work. However, the two Republican commissioners firmly believe that the federal government should avoid regulating this critical industry. This is despite a recent poll showing that 76 percent of Americans believe broadband is as essential to their lives as water and electricity.

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Sure enough, industry efforts to perpetuate the standstill are focused on opposing Sohn’s confirmation. Imagine being in a business where you sell a product most people believe they must buy to survive in today’s economy and yet no rules prevent you from exploiting that position? That would be a pretty sweet deal for your industry, but a terrible one for the public. Quality customer service, public safety readiness and fair access can all be shortchanged to maximize profits and nothing can be done
In this critical moment for digital access, we must confirm Gigi Sohn for the FCC. Industry profits will always take priority in the absence of clear rules and public officials willing to enforce them.

We need the Senate to break the current logjam and put the FCC back on the job by immediately confirming Sohn. Our well-being and economic prosperity depend on it.

Gloria Tristani is a former special advisor to the National Hispanic Media Coalition and served as an FCC commissioner from 1997 to 2001.

TAGS: GIGI SOHN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL DONALD TRUMP JOE BIDEN BROADBAND FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACCESS HOMEWORK GAP DIGITAL DIVIDE NET NEUTRALITY IN THE UNITED STATES NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN
Roger Timmerman: If you’re unhappy with your internet service, you’ll want Gigi Sohn on the FCC

The cable industry has left nearly half of Americans underserved by modern broadband connections.

FILE - In this Dec. 14, 2017, file photo, the seal of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is seen before an FCC meeting to vote on net neutrality in Washington. The Senate has narrowly approved President Donald Trump’s lame-duck nominee, Nathan Simington, on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, to become a member of the Federal Communications Commission. (AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin, File)

By Roger Timmerman | Special to The Tribune | Jan. 11, 2022, 8:00 a.m.

There’s never been so much attention being paid to the nomination of the fifth FCC Commissioner. That’s because there’s a lot at stake for our nation.

Nearly half of Americans can’t easily participate in the digital economy because they live
The cable industry has left nearly half of Americans underserved by modern broadband connections.

Gigi Sohn, who was appointed by the White House for the fifth spot on the five-member FCC, understands that Big Cable doesn’t have an answer or a strategy as to why they’re not making a serious investment in their infrastructure.

The cable industry is spending approximately $8 million a week on lobbying efforts to preserve its business model. Cable knows that if Gigi Sohn is appointed to the FCC, they’ll need to be accountable to American consumers.

The problem is that cable’s business model doesn’t work for most Americans who live in rural areas. A 2018 study by Microsoft (updated October 2020) showed that a whopping 37% of all Americans lack access to broadband service — that’s more than a third of America. The Microsoft study is in stark contrast to the FCC’s own maps that claim 96% of America can access minimum broadband speeds. Why the large disparity?

The FCC maps, which Sohn has committed to make accurate, rely on self-reported data from internet service providers (the same providers seeking to block Sohn’s nomination), while Microsoft relied on actual download and upload speeds achieved when customers ran Windows updates.

Today’s internet networks are largely built on the same infrastructure that was placed decades ago. It’s the same infrastructure we lived with during pandemic lockdowns, lacking the speed, reliability and capacity to meet today’s needs. And even with billions in annual government handouts, wide areas of disinvestment persist. Worse, most Americans would be shocked to learn that broadband is largely unregulated at any level of government.

Gigi Sohn understands this and will push the FCC and the cable industry for greater accountability.

In her testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee on Dec. 1, Sohn pointed to my company, UTOPIA Fiber, as a success story of publicly owned broadband networks. UTOPIA was born out of necessity in 2002 because incumbent providers weren’t willing
to provide our member cities with the very connectivity city leaders and residents deemed necessary. However, the same problems persist today, which is why communities continue to join our all-fiber network.

While UTOPIA had some early-year growing pains, since 2009, we’ve designed, built and operated nearly $400 million worth of fiber-broadband projects throughout Utah at no cost to taxpayers. We exist today for the same reason we did 20 years ago: Broadband is critical infrastructure and increased competition serves to benefit residents and businesses.

Sohn recognizes that Americans need choice in the broadband market. While her approach is not prescriptive, she won’t take cues from cable to stifle successful taxpayer-owned broadband options like ours; she recognizes that competition — public or private — in the broadband market should be a national priority.

In the last few years, I’ve gotten to know Gigi Sohn as a charismatic and pragmatic leader in the telecommunications industry. I’ve found her to be thoughtful, thorough, prepared and reasonable. She listens to all sides and has been known to agree with those of differing political views. She not only understands how policy can impact our states and cities, but also how it can influence business and industry. Sohn wants to see policy that spurs innovation and investment, as well as economic development and jobs.

Her nomination concerns incumbent providers. If Gigi Sohn lands at the FCC, cable will need to be more accountable to consumers, businesses and taxpayers (who’ve subsidized their efforts for years with little in return). If our bipartisan national goal is to expand quality, affordable broadband service to all Americans, it requires a fifth FCC Commissioner who can work collaboratively across party lines—and with industry, business, consumers, and local government. Gigi Sohn is that person.

The bottom line is that if you’re unhappy with your internet service, you’ll want Gigi Sohn at the FCC.
Roger Timmerman is executive director of UTOPIA Fiber / Utah Infrastructure Agency and serves as a delegate of the Utah Republican Party.

By Roger Timmerman | Special to The Tribune

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Ron Yokubaitis: GOP Putting Partisanship over Reform with Gigi Sohn’s FCC Nomination

Nominated by President Biden as Federal Communications Commissioner, Sohn understands the real r
The Federal Communications Commission has persistently gotten communications wrong for the past 20 years, even before broadband was a thing.

The commission was supposed to oversee telecommunications networks while leaving the then-nascent internet alone for the most part, but they dropped the ball. Gigi Sohn is the right person to help the FCC get back to its open access roots.

The 1996 Congress envisioned an open, interconnected, interoperable and user-centric internet that offers users “control over the information they receive” and facilitates “diversity of political discourse.” Congress knew that these goals necessarily required an underlying telecommunications infrastructure that was also robustly competitive and itself open, interconnected and interoperable. That is why they enacted new laws basically adopting and
extending the FCC’s even then longstanding Computer Inquiries regime that made the internet possible to begin with.

“Broadband” is now provided over fiber. Even broadband wireless requires fiber for backhaul. These are telecommunications facilities, that are – or should be – subject to the FCC’s regulatory jurisdiction. Firms providing fiber-based transmission for a fee are – or should be – common carriers. That, in turn, means they must interconnect, interoperate with and sell network access to other telecommunications carriers and those who provide information services on reasonable terms.

Computer Inquiry, the 1980s AT&T and GTE divestitures and the 1996 legislation all so required. But the FCC went rogue in the late 1990s. It allowed the dominant telephone and cable companies to close their local infrastructure, which allowed them to dominate mass-market internet access. The FCC purposefully killed most local market competition. Most independent internet service providers and competitive local exchange carriers were then forced out of business. Only a few major players still compete at the local level, and it is they who control mass-market “access to the internet” over “Broadband.”

*Texas.net dueled early in the Lone Star state with Southwestern Bell*

I started Texas.Net in 1994. We were one of the first independent ISPs in Texas. Southwestern Bell controlled the local network, and it soon started limiting our ability to get the lines we had to have so our customers could get to the internet. We turned to competitive local exchange carriers, and even became one ourselves.

SWBT and the other incumbent carriers convinced the FCC to limit competitors’ access to the last-mile connections serving homes and small businesses. The FCC refused to enforce its Time Warner Cable open access mandate. More than 7,000 independent ISPs were put out of business. That is why the telephone and cable companies now have a largely unregulated mass-market telecommunications and internet access duopoly.

“Net neutrality” was and is necessary only because of the FCC’s decision to close access to local infrastructure. America will continue to suffer high cost, rationed broadband telecommunications and internet for residential, small business, rural and high-cost
customers for so long as the FCC allows and encourages the telephone and cable companies’ domination over local network access. The FCC must return to its “open access” roots.

**Sohn is practical and willing to compromise in seeking bipartisan solutions**

I have known Gigi Sohn since she led Public Knowledge. She understands that net neutrality is just a patch and the real solution is true open access to the underlying local telecommunications infrastructure. I certainly don’t agree with 100% of Sohn’s viewpoints, and we’ve told her so. But even when we disagree our voices are heard, understood and considered. She is practical and willing to compromise. She will seek bipartisan solutions to the real problem.

The Republicans’ effort to derail Gigi Sohn’s nomination to the FCC is misguided. All it does is cripple the FCC’s ability to return to its roots and do what is truly necessary to get America up to speed with the rest of the developed world when it comes to advanced infrastructure in general and internet ubiquity in particular. This is too important a moment for partisan gamesmanship. Billions of dollars and the connectivity of millions of Americans are at stake.

Sohn is the right person at the right moment in history. Her 30 years of experience in telecom, broadband and technology policy, her strong commitment to the First Amendment and diversity of viewpoints, and her work to promote a competitive environment where consumers are best served more than qualify her to be an FCC Commissioner.

**Ron Yokubaitis is CEO of Golden Frog, a company dedicated to protecting internet privacy online, and a director of sister company Giganews, a global provider of Usenet. Both are headquartered in Austin, Texas. This Expert Opinion is exclusive to Broadband Breakfast.**

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UP NEXT
Our digital future needs a full FCC and Gigi Sohn

PUBLISHED JANUARY 24, 2022

Jim Kohlenberger is a former White House technology advisor who served two U.S. Presidents and sits on the board of the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society.

Among the crazy viral videos making the rounds last year, one shows a car careening down the highway trying to make progress with one of its front tires completely missing. You don't need to watch the video to know that you can't drive a car with a missing front tire. It's frankly laughable that someone would even try. Yet that's exactly the car the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has been forced to drive for the past year, during one of the most consequential times in the history of communications.

We cannot navigate our digital future and make gains on the road to progress without a fully functioning, five commissioner FCC. The Biden Administration renominated Gigi Sohn and now the US Senate must move swiftly to confirm her as that 5th Commissioner so that the FCC can move expeditiously on its mission. We stand at the precipice of one of the most profound moments in our digital history. The coming
months will bring a set of critical FCC decisions that will define the scale, scope and speed of our digital transformation — impacting the breadth and potential of what we can achieve with our digital landscape for decades to come.

One of the most important and time-sensitive components is to deliver on what the US Congress has required — to rapidly deploy precise broadband maps to guide the once-in-a-lifetime investments Congress wisely included in the bipartisan infrastructure bill. We’ve got one shot at these maps and we are running out of time to do them, and do them right.

The FCC is also tasked with establishing the long-term framework for the new $14.2 billion Affordable Connectivity Program — a huge and historic opportunity to craft smart rules to ensure that every American has the broadband they need to learn, work, and thrive. And the rest of the digital future won’t wait either. The FCC also needs to develop a robust, effective and efficient spectrum strategy to realize the full promise and potential of our next-generation wireless future from 5G to beyond. The historic nature of these and a dozen other impactful FCC decisions will determine who, how, and when consumers can benefit from the vast digital opportunities just over the horizon. And the only way we get there is with an FCC firing on all cylinders with a full slate of Commissioners to balance, inform, and guide pragmatic policy choices across such a wide range of issues.

We are incredibly lucky that President Biden has nominated Sohn to fill the void at the FCC as she is by far one of the most capable and experienced communication policy leaders I’ve ever known. Over the last several decades, I’ve had the privilege to see firsthand her expertise and experience in advancing our digital future. She has been at the forefront of some of the most important communications policy issues for more than three decades, including efforts to close the digital divide, ensure every American has access to high quality broadband, and improve access for diverse voices.

While at the FCC under Chairman Wheeler, she helped modernize critical broadband programs that enabled the country to connect every school with high-speed broadband, connect every classroom with Wi-Fi, and vastly expand communications opportunities for low-income Americans. She’s not only a policy expert, but also has an innate ability to find ways to bring divergent voices together, finding common ground, in ways that can advance pragmatic policy choices backed by broad consensus. It’s no wonder she has received endorsements from leaders on both the right and the left as the most qualified candidate for Commissioner.
Almost a year in without all five commissioners at the table, it's time the Senate gives the FCC the full slate of qualified leaders it needs to drive our communication future forward by swiftly confirming Sohn without delay. In the race for our future, we simply can't afford to be one crucial leader down.

Jim Kohlenberger

Jim Kohlenberger is a former White House technology advisor who served two U.S. Presidents and sits on the board of the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society.

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Enough Is Enough: The Senate Should Stop Playing Games And Confirm Gigi Sohn

from the the-fcc-has-work-to-do dept
Tue, Jan 25th 2022 10:16pm — Christopher Shelton

Joe Biden entered office a year ago with a mandate to end corporate control of our government by establishing programs to benefit working families and by appointing qualified public servants to execute and oversee those programs.

We anticipated all along that Mitch McConnell would resort to his usual tactics and use the Senate filibuster rules to undermine President Biden's legislative agenda. Appointments should have been a different story. Nearly a decade has passed since Senate Democrats put an end to the filibuster for executive nominations, yet Republicans, on behalf of their corporate sponsors, continue to abuse the confirmation process, preventing President Biden from fulfilling his promises to the American people. Senate Democrats should recognize these games for what they are, stop enabling the obstruction, and move forward on approving President Biden's highly qualified nominees.

Take, for example, the nomination of Gigi Sohn to the Federal Communications Commission. Sohn's strong credentials include co-founding the communications policy advocacy organization Public Knowledge and serving as counsel to former FCC Chairman Tom Wheeler. She is known as a long-time, tireless advocate for the expansion of affordable internet access - one of the key issues on the Democrats' agenda. There is currently a vacant seat on the FCC, and without a full commission it will be difficult to advance the policies necessary to expand affordable broadband service to the millions of American families left on the wrong side of the digital divide.

One person - Sen. Roger Wicker, the Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation - is standing in the way.

Sen. Wicker is promoting the interests of his big corporate campaign donors by preventing a pro-consumer, pro-worker majority at the Federal Communications Commission. Ever since Gigi Sohn was nominated, he has come up with bogus reasons to delay her confirmation vote. During her confirmation hearing she answered questions for hours. She provided reams of written materials and followed up with answers to additional questions. Six weeks later, Wicker asked for yet more documents and suddenly announced that the committee needed to hold yet another confirmation hearing.

Why did he not request such documents in a timely manner? Why did he not submit written questions for the record, standard practice for the committee? Why did he not accept the conclusions of government lawyers who carefully reviewed the very documents he claims to now seek? Because it's not about getting the record, standard practice for the committee? Why did he not request such documents in a timely manner? Why did he not submit written questions for the committee needed to hold yet another confirmation hearing.

Why did he not request such documents in a timely manner? Why did he not submit written questions for the record, standard practice for the committee? Why did he not accept the conclusions of government lawyers who carefully reviewed the very documents he claims to now seek? Because it's not about getting answers. It's about standing in the way of a highly qualified nominee simply because he doesn't like the outcome of the last Presidential election. Sen. Wicker wants an FCC majority that puts corporate profits first, not one that considers what is best for consumers and workers in the industry and that listens to the majority of Americans - Republican and Democrat - who support net neutrality and universal broadband access.

Make no mistake. This is yet another Republican attempt to undermine our democratic system and the functioning of the federal government. They might not be scaling the Capitol walls, wearing face paint, threatening to hang elected officials who don't kowtow to their demands, and publicly parading confederate flags in the halls of the Capitol, but Senate Republicans are trying to undermine the 2020 election results by playing every game possible to prevent a duly elected Administration from having
qualified nominees serving on federal agencies. We have seen time and time again that Republicans will use every trick in the book to prevent oversight of their powerful corporate benefactors.

Unfortunately, after the vote last week by the U.S. Senate, Republican obstructionists will continue to be able to use the legislative filibuster to block critical legislation that will improve the lives of millions of working Americans. But my union helped lead the successful effort during the Obama Administration to eliminate their ability to filibuster qualified and critical nominees so that the federal government can function on behalf of the American people.

That is why Senate Democrats must not give in to these outrageous and egregious efforts to draw out the already long confirmation process for qualified nominees like Gigi Sohn. They must recognize these games for what they are and reject the never ending requests for even more hearings when they have had ample time to ask their questions. Senate Democrats must move forward expeditiously to approve Gigi Sohn and President Biden's other highly qualified nominees.

Christopher M. Shelton is President of the Communications Workers of America (CWA)

Filed Under: congress, delay, fcc, gigi sohn, mitch mcconnell, roger wicker

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On October 26, President Biden appointed Jessica Rosenworcel to Chair the Federal Communications Commission and Gigi Sohn to serve as the fifth Commissioner. NENA is proud to support both of their nominations. Nominees Rosenworcel and Sohn have shown deep dedication to improving the 9-1-1 emergency system and a commitment to public safety during their careers. NENA appreciates their tremendous leadership and encourages the Committee and Senate to vote in support of both their nominations.

As Acting Chair, Jessica Rosenworcel has been a champion for Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) and has worked tirelessly as Commissioner to help ensure FCC-regulated providers are capable of meeting the needs of public safety. In addition to pushing for improved requirements and industry accountability in carrying out the requirements of Kari’s Law and RAY BAUM’s Act, she has been an indefatigable champion for improved network resiliency and supported essential federal funding for the NG9-1-1 transition.

During Gigi Sohn’s tenure at the FCC, her work not only improved requirements for 9-1-1 caller location accuracy, but also requirements for text-to-9-1-1 — an essential tool for millions of Americans in need every day. Her work also helped elevate the need to tackle issues of funding and deploying NG9-1-1 in public-safety answering points nationwide. We look forward to working with Sohn as she advances the Commission’s work to fund “middle mile” internet infrastructure that will serve as an essential foundation to ensure underserved and rural communities have access to NG9-1-1.

We at NENA look forward to working with both nominees on issues pressing to the public safety community.
Statement of Newsmax CEO Christopher Ruddy Re: FCC Nominations

In the past I have dealt with both Jessica Rosenworcel and Gigi Sohn on policy issues affecting the FCC and media and have found them to be fair-minded persons of strong integrity.

President Biden has nominated both to the FCC and I support their nominations.

Increasingly, independently operated cable news channels like Newsmax are being sidelined in favor of a small number of mega-corporations who dominate the channel line-ups, forcing upon consumers expensive and little-watched networks. It’s bad for the public interest and dangerous for democracy.

While I don’t always agree with the nominees on many policy matters, Newsmax fully supports the Commission’s mandate to promote diversity, localism and competition in the marketplace. Newsmax believes both nominees are committed to that mandate and I urge the Senate to confirm the nominations of Jessica Rosenworcel and Gigi Sohn.