



September 17, 2020

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## FCC Commissioners

### Trump Nominates Simington as FCC Commissioner

President Trump [sent his nomination](#) of Nathan A. Simington to be an FCC Commissioner to the Senate on September 16, 2020. The term would be for five years from July 1, 2019, and if confirmed he would replace Commissioner O’Rielly. Simington is currently a senior advisor at NTIA, specializing in network and telecommunications policy.

## High Cost USF Reform

### Wireless Bureau Adopts Methodology for Mobile Service Estimates in Remote Areas of Alaska

The Wireless Telecommunications Bureau issued an [order](#) on September 16, 2020, adopting a methodology for estimating the number of Alaskans who receive mobile service within census blocks in remote areas of Alaska. The bureau said it will use this

methodology to: determine whether mobile providers that participate in the Commission's plan for providing support for the deployment of fixed and mobile service in high cost areas of Alaska (the Alaska Plan) have met their performance commitments; and identify census blocks in remote areas of Alaska where these minimum service commitments apply.

## ICC

### USTelecom Discusses 8YY Access Charge Reform

USTelecom [spoke with](#) Commissioner Carr's legal advisor on September 11, 2020, to suggest the Commission adopt 8YY access charge reforms based upon USTelecom's [compromise proposal](#). It discussed the need for a sufficient recovery mechanism for price cap carriers and proposed that, at a minimum, the FCC should permit carriers limited by the \$30 rate ceiling in their eligible recovery from the 2011 ICC reforms to increase the rate ceiling by up to \$1, for a maximum rate ceiling of \$31. USTelecom asserted this \$1 increase would: still be significantly below the FCC's own average voice urban monthly rate of \$34.81; and represent an increase of only 3.3% since 2011 when overall inflation throughout the economy exceeded 15%.

## Broadband

### USTelecom Releases Broadband Pricing Index

USTelecom [announced](#) on September 16, 2020, it released the 2020 Broadband Pricing Index [report](#). It said using FCC and other public data, the BPI research assesses recent trends in residential fixed broadband pricing and reveals during the 2015 to 2020 period there have been substantial reductions in price for both the most popular and highest-speed broadband internet services and significant improvements in overall broadband speeds.

## Other Universal Service

### Wireline Bureau Waives Rural Health Care Invoice Deadline

The Wireline Competition Bureau issued an [order](#) on September 16, 2020, waiving on its own motion the invoice filing deadline for the Rural Health Care program's Healthcare Connect Fund, to provide relief to applicants and service providers who received funding year 2019 funding commitment letters after or within 180 days of the invoice filing deadline. The bureau will allow these entities to submit invoices to USAC within 180 days from the later of the release date of this order or the issuance of a funding commitment letter by USAC.

### Wireline Bureau Opens Second E-rate Funding Window for Funding Year 2020

The Wireline Competition Bureau issued an [order](#) on September 16, 2020, directing USAC to open a second funding year 2020 window for E-rate to allow schools to request additional funding to meet increased on-campus bandwidth needs without having to undergo a new competitive bidding process. The bureau said the second filing window will open upon publication of the order in the Federal Register and will close on October 16, 2020. [news release](#)

### GAO Releases Report on E-rate Fraud Risks

The Government Accountability Office released a [report](#) on September 16, 2020, on E-rate program fraud risk management. The report addresses the E-rate program's key fraud risks, the extent to which FCC and USAC are managing fraud risks in accordance with

leading practices, and the extent to which the FCC and USAC face challenges in effectively employing data analytics to support fraud risk management activities. [summary of report](#)

## Unbundling

### WorldNet Discusses NPRM on Unbundling

WorldNet Telecommunications [spoke with](#) Commissioner Starks' legal advisor on September 16, 2020, regarding its opposition to the Commission's proposals in the [NPRM](#) that it says will eliminate and/or further restrict access to unbundled network elements. WorldNet asserted the unique circumstances presented in Puerto Rico and the potential for stranding significant amounts of competitive facilities investment weigh heavily in favor of not applying the FCC's proposal in Puerto Rico or, at a minimum, grandfathering existing dark fiber services and deferring the implementation of the remaining UNEs under consideration at least five years.

## Ex Parte Rules

### Reply Due Date Corrected for NPRM Updating Ex Parte Rules

An FCC [notice](#) was published in the Federal Register on September 17, 2020, correcting the due date for filing reply comments on the [NPRM](#) updating the FCC's ex parte rules. **Comments are due October 2, 2020; reply comments are due October 19, 2020.**

## Slamming

### Consumer Bureau Addresses Slamming Complaint Against Clear Rate

The Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau issued an [order](#) on September 16, 2020, addressing a slamming complaint against Clear Rate Communications. The bureau found Clear Rate's actions violated the Commission's slamming rules and granted the complaint.

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