



August 26, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Washington, DC 20500

**RE: Federal Communications Chair Appointment**

Dear President Biden,

LGBT Technology Partnership & Institute (LGBT Tech), the nation's premier LGBTQ+ organization at the intersection of civil rights and technology policy, writes today to urge you to appoint Jessica Rosenworcel as permanent chair of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC).

LGBT Tech encourages the continued early adoption and use of cutting-edge, new and emerging technologies by providing information, education and strategic outreach for LGBTQ+ communities. We are a national, nonpartisan group of LGBTQ+ organizations, academics, and high technology companies whose mission is to engage with critical technology and public policy leaders for strategic discussions at all levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has starkly revealed existing technological and digital inequalities and has made it even more clear and urgent how important access to high-speed internet is for everyone in America. However, it has also exposed significant gaps and barriers to affordable and reliable connectivity that persist across the country, especially for LGBTQ+ communities. LGBTQ+ Americans remain more likely to be poor than heterosexual individuals. While many have experienced financial hardship during this pandemic, LGBTQ+ people collectively have a poverty rate of 21.6%, which is much higher than the rate for the cisgender straight people of 15.7%. The issues of connectivity and access are even more critical for LGBTQ+ people of color in rural areas who are often at risk of multiple types of discrimination, further limiting their chances to access quality services, health care, and employment. For these LGBTQ+ individuals, broadband connectivity may be the only way to access medical, mental health or employment opportunities not available in their local communities due to discrimination.



We commend your administration's aim of closing the digital divide and ensuring that everyone has access to affordable broadband as well as the steps you have already taken to expand digital connectivity to all communities, including underserved communities such as the LGBTQ+ community. It is to ensure that these priorities continue to be met that I urge you to permanently appoint Acting Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel to Chair of the Federal Communications Commission. I believe that Commissioner Rosenworcel is best positioned to steer the FCC through this critical time and ensure that your goals of closing the digital divide are met by the FCC.

Commissioner Rosenworcel has a long and proven track record as a passionate advocate for closing the digital divide. Notably, Commissioner Rosenworcel has always strived to ensure that the voices of marginalized communities, such as the LGBTQ+ community, are part of the conversation. She has welcomed LGBTQ+ organizations to really understand and respond to the needs of the varied communities we serve and has made sure to include the needs of our communities in her policies and priorities. Her focus on access, affordability, and inclusion of marginalized communities at all levels of decision-making at the FCC has never been more critical. During her eight-month tenure as Acting Chair, Commissioner Rosenworcel has led the FCC in accomplishing several important milestones that benefit marginalized communities including:

- Leading the FCC to unanimously adopt rules creating the Nation's largest internet affordability program ever (\$3 billion) with over 4 million households enrolled.
- Leading the FCC to unanimously adopt rules creating the Nation's largest program (\$7 billion) to connect students. A critical program during the pandemic, with as many as 17 million students locked out of virtual learning due to a lack of home internet.
- Kickstarting work to make the FCC's broadband maps better and creating the Broadband Data Task Force.
- Opening a new \$250 million window for telehealth funding which will provide critical telehealth services to LGBTQ+ communities in rural areas where they might not otherwise have access to affirming healthcare options.
- Amplifying the work of the Communications Equity and Diversity Council through the expansion of its scope and mission to review more broadly critical diversity and equity issues across the tech sector.



Additionally, Commissioner Rosenworcel has supported programs specifically designed to close the digital divide and expand access for the LGBTQ+ community such as her critical support of the establishment of 988 as the national three-digit number for mental health emergencies. Suicide is a pandemic disease for LGBTQ+ people living in the United States. LGB youth in particular seriously contemplate suicide at almost three times the rate of their heterosexual counterparts and are almost five times as likely to have attempted it. Commissioner Rosenworcel's passionate work in this area is critical to our LGBTQ+ youth.

Given her strong qualifications and her proven track record at the FCC as well as her unwavering commitment to closing the digital divide for all communities including marginalized communities such as the LGBTQ community, I strongly support the appointment of Jessica Rosenworcel as Chair of the FCC.

Thanks in advance for your consideration of this request on behalf of marginalized communities across the country and we look forward to working with your administration to advance these goals.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chris Wood", with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Wood  
Executive Director, LGBT Technology Partnership & Institute