

**STATEMENT OF
CHAIRWOMAN JESSICA ROSENWORCEL**

Re: *Schools and Libraries Universal Service Support Mechanism*, Report and Order, CC Docket No. 02-6 (January 27, 2022).

Last week, Cynthia Chavez Lamar was named Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. This is big. That's because she is the first Native woman to serve in this role at the Smithsonian. She is also an enrolled member of the San Felipe Pueblo.

A few years ago, I wrote an editorial in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* with then Representative, now Senator Ben Ray Luján. It drew attention to the San Felipe Pueblo because the Tribe's library was one of the very first in Indian Country in New Mexico to be connected to really high-speed broadband. This, too, was big. Because for some residents of the reservation it was the first time they could head online to learn, connect with loved ones, grow businesses, and search for jobs. In fact, the demand for broadband at the library was so great, the San Felipe Pueblo did something to accommodate the community during library off-hours: They built a porch. This made it easier for any resident to sit outside and use the signal at the library to connect at any time.

There's an undeniably scrappy charm to this effort. But it is also a stark reminder of how much more work we have to do to make sure that broadband reaches everyone, everywhere.

To help get this done, we have a lot of new efforts from Congress. But we also have to be smarter about the programs already on the books. One of those programs is E-Rate. It's the nation's largest education technology program and it is a powerhouse that helps bring broadband to schools and libraries in every state across the country. But for all the good E-Rate funding has done, not all Tribal libraries have been able to make use of it. You see, in the past if the Tribal library was not designated as an eligible library by a state agency—a designation that can pose problems of sovereignty—they were unable to participate in the program. That means in some of the most rural and remote communities, E-Rate never really got off the ground.

We fix that today, building on the work of Congress in the Museum and Library Services Act and our own efforts to address this issue in the Emergency Connectivity Fund. Here's what that means: Libraries on Tribal lands nationwide can participate in the current E-Rate funding cycle. That means they can get the support they need to deploy broadband for civic and commercial life—without complex challenges to jurisdiction standing in the way.

That means that while the San Felipe Pueblo library may be among the first to benefit from this program, it won't be the last. And let's be sure, too, that national leaders like Cynthia Chavez Lamar, who may be the first, are also not the last.

Thank you to the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Senator Ben Ray Luján for championing this effort. Thank you also to the staff who moved this from rulemaking to order in record time, including Kate Dumouchel, Sue McNeil, Kris Monteith, Ryan Palmer, Johnnay Schrieber, and Hayley Steffen from the Wireline Competition Bureau; Lloyd Collier, Matthew Duchesne, Barbara Esbin, Rhonda Lien, and Sayuri Rajapakse from the Consumer and Governmental Affairs Bureau; Mark Montano from the Office of Economics and Analytics; and Malena Barzilai, Michele Ellison, Elizabeth Lyle, Rick Mallen, Linda Oliver, Bill Richardson, and Jeffrey Steinberg from the Office of General Counsel.