

ALA American Library Association

June 16, 2023

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
511 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
512 Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz:

The American Library Association (ALA) supports the nomination of Anna Gomez to the open seat on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). We also support the renomination of commissioners Brendan Carr and Geoffrey Starks to their respective seats on the FCC. We urge the committee to confirm these nominations with due haste, in the interest of allowing the FCC to continue its work promoting competition, innovation and investment in broadband services and facilities for all Americans without further hinderance.

Gomez, when confirmed, would restore the FCC to its full capacity and allow the agency to operate more effectively. She brings a wealth of knowledge in public service and telecommunications policy, with experience within the FCC, the State Department, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and as a partner at Wiley Rein. Throughout these positions, Gomez has acted as an advocate for Americans seeking reliable, affordable broadband connections. She has also recognized and encouraged the role of public libraries in expanding access to broadband in rural and underserved communities.

Commissioner Starks, in his capacity as an FCC Commissioner, has consistently supported the expansion and implementation of universal service programs, such as E-Rate. Starks has used his time as Commissioner to strive to ensure all Americans are protected from intrusive data collection and selling practices, removing communications barriers for low-income communities, and, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, retain vital Internet access. Starks has regularly acknowledged and supported the role of libraries as providers of universal service.

Commissioner Carr, as an FCC Commissioner, has acted in support of universal service, particularly towards improving broadband access in rural and tribal communities. Carr has led on 5G infrastructure, telehealth, and workforce development. Commissioner Carr has particularly stressed the importance of ensuring tribal libraries can access E-Rate funding, empowering them to serve as hubs for their communities and improving connectivity for the area.

The ALA urges the Committee on Science, Commerce, and Transportation to act rapidly to confirm all of these nominated individuals. We eagerly await the opportunity to work with a fully functional FCC to the benefit of all Americans.

Sincerely,

/s/ Alan Inouye
Senior Director, ALA Office of Public Policy & Advocacy

/s/ Megan Janicki
Deputy Director, ALA Office of Public Policy & Advocacy

/s/ Larra Clark
Deputy Director, ALA Office of Public Policy & Advocacy

cc: Members, U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation