

**REMARKS OF  
COMMISSIONER JESSICA ROSENWORCEL  
L'OREAL USA FOR WOMEN IN SCIENCE FELLOWSHIPS AWARDS CEREMONY  
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Thank you, Suzie Davidowitz, for your kind introduction. Thank you also to L'Oreal USA and the American Association for the Advancement of Science for having me here this evening.

It is a treat to be here to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the For Women in Science Fellowships. But more than that, it is a joy to be able to congratulate the fellowship recipients here tonight. What a terrific honor. I am awed by your expertise in microbiology, chemical and biochemical engineering, molecular biology, biochemistry, and evolutionary biology and ornithology.

While I admit that I do not understand all aspects of your work, your professional life and mine have a lot in common. You see, my stock-in-trade is technology. I spend my days at the Federal Communications Commission working on issues from spectrum to bandwidth and beyond. So here is what is similar: We both work in fields where the number of women is too few, especially at the top.

I want to talk more about that in a moment, but I first want to tell you a story—a story about my first day at the Federal Communications Commission as a Commissioner.

The first day in a job like mine goes a lot like you might imagine. The top brass of the agency assembles. My family joins them. There's a bible and there's an oath.

I dutifully swear to uphold the constitution. And then I head to my new office.

Now before this, I had been in positions proximate to power, but not the principal.

And before this, I had a small office, not necessarily the big desk.

So I gingerly open the door to my office suite on my first day.

Walk down the hall, step into the office.

And it's large. But the one thing that gets my attention is that for some reason there is a table—a dining room table—in the middle of the room. Which is odd. Not a small one. One big enough for 12 people. Smack in the middle of the room.

I had never seen this before in a Commissioner's office. It wasn't a corporate table. It was more like a dining room table. It was the kind of table that makes you think of family reunions and turkey and ham and holidays.

What was this table doing here? Did someone think I would be serving dinner?

So in a first, sweeping, grand gesture, I use my new power on the very first day to make an executive decision. I got rid of the table.

Fast forward a year or so. The office looks good. The stray furniture is gone. The walls are painted a stately blue. The carpet is clean—or cleanish. The pictures are up.

But somehow I can't stop thinking of that table.

Here's why. When you reach some heights in your career—as the fellowship recipients here have—you think about what it means for women to have a seat at the proverbial table.

Because when it comes to making decisions in Washington and in New York and in board rooms and in laboratories across the country, I believe that the best decisions are made when there's some diversity at the table.

So that table is no longer in my office, but I keep an iconic one in my mind. I think about it in everything that I do as a Commissioner.

Because day-in and day-out, I am in meetings and events in Washington and on the road and I can't help but be reminded. The number of women I see in technical fields is simply too few. But our new economy is built on technology. In fact, science, technology, engineering, and math are the fastest growing fields in our economy. There are three times as many job opportunities in STEM fields than in any other field. Yet the Bureau of Labor Statistics tells us that while women hold half the jobs in this country, they hold less than a quarter of all jobs in STEM fields.

We need to close that gap. We need more women at the table.

Because it's a matter of equity.

Because it's an economic imperative.

Because it's the right thing to do.

So to our winners tonight, you deserve heaps of praise and an absolutely fierce celebration. But I think that with your honor comes responsibility. Don't sit at that table by yourself. As you move on in your professional lives and in science, bring other women to the table. Because your success alone is not enough. Pull up a chair and encourage other women to join you.

I think if you do, we will multiply our numbers. So when the next generation aspires to do big things in science and technology, their gender won't mean a thing. And won't *that* be something.

Congratulations and thank you.