

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 17, 2014

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Mr. Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
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Dear Chairman Wheeler:

I write you again today to urge the Federal Communications Commission to protect Americans by ensuring first responders can find 9-1-1 callers—even when they call from wireless phones indoors. 9-1-1 calls are made when we are most in need, and our policies governing how these calls are handled should be built for the modern wireless era.

I heard firsthand about the importance of location information for first responders and those in emergency situations when I chaired a hearing this past January for the Senate Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet. In addition to stories of those in need experiencing unacceptable waits for emergency services, we also heard from a representative of the deaf and hard of hearing community on the importance of accurate location information to those with disabilities who may have more difficulty communicating their physical location.

We also learned that of the approximately 240 million 9-1-1 calls each year, more than two thirds of these calls are made from wireless phones. As recently noted by the Association of Arkansas Counties, this number is even higher in Arkansas where 80 percent of 9-1-1 calls are made from wireless phones. As more and more Americans become wireless-only consumers, the percentage of wireless 9-1-1 calls is likely to increase.

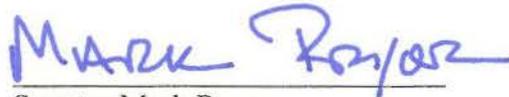
Distressingly, the FCC's current rules do not treat all of these calls equally. When a 9-1-1 call is made from either a landline phone or on a wireless phone outdoors, there are rules in place to ensure location information is delivered to our public safety officials. But when that same call is made from a wireless phone indoors, no rules apply. That is an unacceptable gap in the nation's 9-1-1 policies.

I was therefore encouraged in February to see the Commission respond to my call for action by proposing rules for indoor location accuracy. The Commission proposed strong rules that would ensure that those calling for help can be found, even if they are calling indoors from their wireless phones. And as the National Emergency Number Association has commented, the record in the proceeding demonstrates that "technologies can be deployed on a reasonable timeframe to satisfy the requirements proposed by the

Commission.” Further, I believe the recent agreement between public safety officials and the wireless carriers is a promising sign that a strong rule can be implemented. I urge the Commission to continue to look to all stakeholders in drafting a final rule.

I believe now is the time for action. I encourage you to take steps to make sure our policies for 9-1-1 reflect the realities of how people communicate. When someone calls 9-1-1 for help on their wireless phone, first responders should be able to find them no matter where they are.

Sincerely,



Senator Mark Pryor

Cc: FCC Commissioner Clyburn
FCC Commissioner Rosenworcel
FCC Commissioner Pai
FCC Commissioner O’Rielly