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United States Senate  
Office of the Sergeant at Arms**

**National Preparedness Awareness Day**

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Good morning and thank you. It's an honor to be joining you today for National Preparedness Awareness Day. I bring greetings from Chairman Kevin Martin, the other FCC Commissioners and the staff in the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau.

I have been serving as Chief of the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau since April 2007. Prior to coming to Washington, I had 30 years of law enforcement experience, most recently as the Chief of Police at the UNC Chapel Hill Department of Public Safety. In short, I have had a great deal of experience in the public safety world and it all has been very rewarding. However, I must say that my experience in Washington has also proven to be rewarding because I know the job our Bureau does daily makes a difference in the public safety community and in the daily lives of American citizens.

Today, I'd like to give you a brief overview of the Bureau and how we're accomplishing our mission of collaborating with the public safety community, industry and government to license, facilitate, restore and recover communications services used by the citizens of the United States, including first responders, before, during and after emergencies.

You may not know that our Bureau is only a couple of years old. We officially began operations in September 2006 to develop and administer the Commission's policies for public safety and communications issues such as emergency preparedness, protection of the nation's critical communications infrastructure and the creation of interoperable communications networks. We also serve as a Clearinghouse for public safety communications information and take the lead for the Commission on emergency response communications issues. It's a tall order to fill, but we are making great strides. We have dedicated professionals working in our Bureau who take their mission of maintaining and improving public safety and homeland security very seriously.

The Bureau is committed to promoting open dialogue with industry, other government agencies and the community in order to meet our goals. As I alluded to earlier, a primary goal of the Bureau is to support and advance initiatives that strengthen and enhance the security and reliability of the nation's communications infrastructure and public safety and emergency response capabilities. This enables the Commission to assist the public safety community, the communications industry and all levels of government in the event of a natural or man-made disaster or pandemic. We understand the Commission alone cannot keep our

nation's communication infrastructure safe or resilient. Therefore, it is imperative that we create effective partnerships and work as a cohesive team, especially when disaster strikes.

We have three divisions within our Bureau and each has distinct duties. We have a Policy Division which drafts, develops and administers rules, regulations and policies, including those pertaining to 9-1-1/Enhanced 9-1-1, Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), operability and interoperability for public safety communications, network security and reliability and communications infrastructure protection. In addition, the Policy Division oversees licensing of spectrum for public safety entities such as police and fire departments.

Our Communications System Analysis Division performs analysis and studies which address public safety, homeland security, emergency management, emergency preparedness, disaster management and national security issues. In addition, this Division collects and analyzes information regarding network outages and situational awareness information from communications service providers affected by disasters. They also provide engineering expertise to the Bureau on a host of public safety communications issues.

Finally, our Public Communications Outreach & Operations Division leads our Bureau's emergency response procedures and operations. During incidents or emergencies, it serves as the Commission's lead point of contact for all inter-governmental coordination activities with other federal departments and agencies.

This Division operates the Commission's Operations Center which provides 24-hour a day monitoring and situation awareness. In addition, they also provide expert strategic assessments on trends for all crisis scenarios that may have public safety, national security or emergency preparedness implications.

Now that you have an idea of what our Bureau does and how we contribute to public safety and national security, I'd like to switch gears and focus on what you need to know about communicating in an emergency and how you can help first responders and the entire public safety community in the event of a disaster or crisis. Each of us can have an effect in our communities in the event of a disaster or crisis. Our goal is for you to have a positive one and not a negative one. Therefore, it's imperative you

know what to do so that you can act responsibly in the event of an emergency and so that you can tell others how to do the same.

First and foremost, you need to have a communications plan with your family. In disasters, you all know that telephone lines will become overwhelmed and you don't want to become part of that problem. Therefore, in an emergency or disaster stay off the phone as much as possible. If, however, you must contact someone, it will probably be easier to contact someone outside of the affected area. Therefore, have an out-of-state contact that you, your family or staff can call who can relay messages if needed.

Another way you can help is to utilize text messaging whenever possible in the event of an emergency. Those messages will have a better chance of getting through than telephone calls if the telephone system is overwhelmed.

If you are in a situation in which you have to call 9-1-1, please keep the following things in mind. First, make sure you can tell the telecommunicator the location of your emergency. This is especially important if you're using a wireless phone. While the Commission is making an effort to increase the ability of first responders to respond to wireless 9-1-1 calls, the mobility of

wireless phones makes determining a caller's location more complicated than is true for traditional wireline services. Therefore, make sure you are giving the telecommunicator the most accurate information you can about the location of the emergency. Second, if you're calling from a wireless phone, make sure you give the telecommunicator your wireless phone number so they can call you back if you get disconnected or if further information is needed.

In the event of an emergency, many people will rely on local radio and/or television stations to receive updates on what is happening and what they should do. Please pay attention to any alerts that are broadcast because they can give you valuable information as to what to do and where to go in the event of an emergency or disaster.

I'd like to note a few more things you will want to do in the event of an emergency in order to keep your family safe and to keep you or your family from becoming part of the disaster or crisis. First, always have a battery-operated radio with fresh batteries on hand so that you can stay abreast of current activities within your community. Also, remember to always keep your cell phone battery charged. Next, assemble a first aid kit for your

home and each vehicle. And last but not least, in order to help public safety personnel effectively and efficiently allocate emergency resources, know other numbers to call besides 9-1-1 for non-emergency police, fire and EMS services. In this case, you should learn and use designated numbers in your communities for non-life-threatening incidents. Utilizing these numbers when appropriate instead of 9-1-1 will help alleviate the surge that can occur at 9-1-1 communications centers during emergencies.

I've briefly touched on some small steps you can take to better prepare for an emergency or disaster. The things I've mentioned do not take much effort, but they can make a huge difference in times of disaster for you, your family, and also for our first responders and the entire public safety community. Benjamin Franklin once said that "failing to prepare is preparing to fail." I ask you to take action on these things and to encourage your colleagues and family to do the same. Be prepared and be vigilant.

The Federal Communications Commission and the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau strive to make our nation safe and to make public safety communications as reliable and resilient as possible. We're doing our part and we ask you and



your communities to help us in that endeavor especially in times of crisis.

It has been an honor to spend time with you on National Preparedness Awareness Day and I thank you for having me here today. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to your communities and to our nation.