



**Opening Statement of Chairman Sam Graves**  
**House Committee on Small Business**  
**Hearing: “Is the FCC Responding to the Needs of Small Business and Rural America?”**  
**September 17, 2014**

Good afternoon. The hearing will come to order.

Today, we welcome Chairman of the FCC Board of Commissioners, Thomas Wheeler, to our committee. He will be discussing how the FCC is responding to the needs of small businesses and rural America. Thank you for taking the time to be with us, Mr. Chairman.

Modern communications technology has provided endless opportunities to small businesses and to rural America. The growth of the telecommunications industry and the advances in the way we communicate with each other in the past 15 years has been no less than astonishing. We have seen a digital revolution that has fundamentally changed how America does business.

Because of this rapid advancement, small firms can communicate with potential buyers around the world; family farmers are using wireless technologies to monitor their crop production, and entrepreneurs can launch a website or application from their living room from just about anywhere. Most importantly, these new technologies provide the gateway and opportunity for economic growth and job creation - especially in rural areas.

Continued congressional oversight of the FCC is essential to ensure that the concerns and ideas of small firms and those enterprises located in rural America are given due consideration during the regulatory process. This is a theme that this committee has tried to hammer home throughout the past two Congresses, including when Chairman Wheeler’s predecessor appeared here two years ago—policy makers need to listen to small businesses.

There are 28.2 million small businesses in America, they make up 99.7 percent of U.S. employer firms, and create 63 percent of all the net new jobs in the country. We cite these statistics often because it is our job to remind people in Washington how important the vitality of our small businesses are. By almost every measurable mark, small businesses drive our economy.

What we want to do here today is ensure that the FCC gets the job done right when developing their regulatory policies.

This means ensuring an open and free internet that will allow for the free flow of information and services, facilitating the build out of high speed internet to rural and underserved areas, and providing the needed spectrum to industry players both small and large to ensure that our tech companies continue to innovate and create jobs. Our Committee can be a valuable resource for the FCC as it moves forward with the numerous actions it is working on and we'd like to be your partner in that process. It is important for small businesses to have a seat at the table early in the regulatory process as they can provide real world examples of how the regulation will affect them, and provide regulators with potentially less burdensome, but similarly effective options.

Thank you all for being here and I now yield to Ms. Velazquez for her opening statement.

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