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PAUL D. TONKO

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
20TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

RANKING MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT,
MANUFACTURING, AND CRITICAL MATERIALS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY, CLIMATE, AND GRID SECURITY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY

May 18, 2023

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
Chairwoman
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel:

I write to you to share my deep concern that significant cell coverage gaps still exist in many communities in New York and across the country, posing significant threats to public health and safety.

As you may be aware, on Saturday, April 15, 2023, a 20-year-old resident of my district, Kaylin Gillis, was shot after the car she was in with several friends mistakenly turned into the wrong driveway in a rural Upstate New York town. While not far from New York's capital and other large cities, the area lacks reliable cell coverage. Ms. Gillis' friends struggled to reach 9-1-1, driving several miles before connecting with emergency services. By the time they got help, Ms. Gillis had died. I am heartbroken by this senseless tragedy that underlies the critical importance not just of taking long overdue action to address gun violence in this country, but also of ensuring reliable cell coverage.

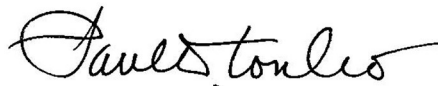
Access to wireless technology is essential. Americans rely on cellular service to share important messages with friends and family, navigate new places, conduct business, and, importantly, access emergency services when needed.

Even as tremendous strides have been made to expand cellular and broadband coverage across the country, there is more work to do. New Yorkers, particularly those in rural communities, continue to report gaps in cellular coverage that undermine public health and safety, hamper local economies and businesses, and pose everyday challenges for residents and visitors. In some instances, access to quality cell coverage could be a matter of life and death.

I appreciate the steps that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has taken to address this issue, including by establishing the 5G Fund for Rural America on October 27, 2020 to make up to \$9 billion available for expanding 5G mobile broadband service to rural areas. I urge you to take every reasonable measure to utilize existing authorities, including through the 5G Fund for Rural America, and promptly deploy existing federal funds for mobile service to unserved and underserved communities.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul D. Tonko". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress