Squadron, Rozic, and Chin Urge Improved Multilingual Access

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Elected Officials Respond to FCC Proposed Changes to the Lifeline Program

New York, NY – Upon careful review of the Federal Communications Commission's ("FCC") Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("FNPRM") discussing potential changes to the Lifeline program, State Senator Daniel Squadron (D-Brooklyn), Assemblywoman Nily Rozic (D,WF-Fresh Meadows), and Council Member Margaret Chin (D-Manhattan) submitted comments this week expressing disappointment that the FCC makes no mention of providing recertification notices in languages other than English and Spanish ("multilingual notices").

In highlighting this omission, the legislators emphasized that multilingual notices are crucial to improving the Lifeline program and urged the FCC to issue them as soon as possible. Without this necessary change, constituents across New York will continue to experience major problems when enrolling in Lifeline.

In the letter, the legislators also commented on three key proposals in the FNPRM. The legislators supported two proposals that would allow the FCC to create a dispute resolution process and adopt a framework for states to support the federal Lifeline program. They opposed one proposal that would allow the FCC to transfer Lifeline benefits as vouchers

directly to consumers.

Finally, the legislators noted that over 30,000 Lifeline customers in New York lost their benefits since last year. As a result of this alarming statistic, the legislators called upon the FCC to explore providing a credit or reimbursement for those who unfairly lost their benefits due to a flawed recertification process and poor language access.

While Squadron, Rozic, and Chin applaud the FCC for the work done so far in responding to previous comments and in soliciting feedback on proposed changes, they continue to call for immediate action and commitment to improve language access for Lifeline subscribers.

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