

In light of the reform process in which we're currently engaged, and the SCC's involvement in this endeavor to ensure equitable reform for the small rural telco industry, my personal reflections on this day, July 4th, have gained considerable gravity this year. For the first time in my career, I've found myself exercising a much-expanded sense of civic duty, a call which my fellow SCC members have also answered.

I wish I could say that I've relished every step of the way—the rush-hour traffic drives to and from Washington, DC, the rapid ingestion and digestion of FCC Orders and Notices for Proposed Rulemaking, as well as the pecuniary repercussions of both of these obligations and many more. The truth is that I haven't enjoyed it. Not one bit. However, that's part of what inspired me to start thinking about this journey from a much broader perspective—our country was formed by the fortitude of individuals in a much more serious situation, but acting upon the same principle: making individual sacrifices to establish a structure enabling “general welfare.”

The soldiers of the American Revolution were hardly “soldiers” at all—they were farmhands, stable boys, common merchants and landowners who were united by a belief so strong that each was willing to step outside of his or her daily, personal obligations, and to do what needed to be done for immediate justice and future prosperity. In the case of the SCC, we're not comprised of experts in the legislative game—politicians, lawyers, or lobbyists—though many good people from these fields have helped and continue to help us along the way. Rather, we consist of small telco executives who have entered this regulatory fight in the interests of protecting our employees, our customers, and the rural and national economies at large.

While the circumstances under which we as an industry find ourselves today are rather unfortunate, I consider it a genuine privilege to be able to partake in this painstaking process. I've often reflected upon a quote attributed to Alexander Woollcott: “I'm tired of hearing it said that democracy doesn't work. Of course it doesn't work. We are supposed to work it.” This Independence Day, I urge you to consider these words as well, not only in the hope that you'll join our effort, but to examine the implications for your own life and to get involved by making a positive impact in whichever way possible. Our system is wonderful in that it structurally allows for such activism, and in fact constitutionally encourages it. To me, it's not a question of whether we want to get involved, but rather it's our duty to be involved and responding to that call is what it means to be an American.