



January 12, 2026 – (Alexandria, VA) The National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) Executive Director and CEO Justin Smith released the following statement regarding the FCC's latest action in handset unlocking.

"America's Sheriffs applauds the Federal Communications Commission and Chairman Carr for granting Verizon's petition to waive the handset unlocking rule. The Commission's action acknowledges that well-intentioned but outdated regulations can create real-world risks when they are exploited by sophisticated criminal networks.

This decision represents an important step toward addressing a rapidly growing criminal enterprise that has placed significant strain on law enforcement agencies across the country. As NSA outlined in its comments to the Commission, accelerated handset unlocking requirements have created an exploitable loophole that organized criminal networks use to facilitate large-scale device fraud and international trafficking. These schemes divert scarce law enforcement resources, fuel additional criminal activity, and increase risks to officers and the public alike.

By granting this waiver, the FCC has demonstrated its commitment to public safety and modernizing outdated regulations, as well as its support for law enforcement professionals who confront the unintended consequences of outdated rules. Today's action will reduce incentives for organized crime, help protect American consumers and businesses from fraud, and strengthen efforts to combat transnational criminal organizations.

NSA appreciates the FCC's willingness to engage with law enforcement stakeholders and to take meaningful action to enhance public safety. We look forward to continuing collaboration with the Commission to ensure communications policies reflect today's security realities."

#### **About the National Sheriffs' Association**

The National Sheriffs' Association is one of the largest associations of law enforcement professionals in the U.S., representing more than 3,000 elected Sheriffs across the nation, and with a total membership of more than 10,000. NSA is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising the level of professionalism among Sheriffs, their deputies, and others in the field of law enforcement, public safety, and criminal justice. Throughout its eighty-five-year history, NSA has also served as an information resource for all law enforcement, as well as state governments and the federal government.

###