

Chairman Julius Genachowski



Since being sworn in as Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in June 2009, Julius Genachowski has focused the agency on unleashing the opportunities of wired and wireless broadband. He has successfully pursued policies to promote investment and job creation, drive innovation, foster competition, and empower consumers. During Genachowski's tenure, the FCC developed and is implementing the National Broadband Plan, an ambitious strategy to harness the opportunities of high-speed Internet, promote U.S. global competitiveness, and bring the benefits of 21st century communications to all Americans.

Under Genachowski's leadership, the Commission has worked to modernize outdated programs and eliminate barriers to innovation and investment. The Commission adopted the landmark Connect America Fund, a once-in-a generation overhaul of the multi-billion dollar Universal Service Fund and related rules, transforming it from supporting telephone service to broadband. The Connect America Fund replaces legacy programs with new market-driven, incentive-based policies to achieve universal broadband, both wired and wireless.

The Commission is pursuing other forward-looking strategies to unleash the opportunities of mobile broadband, including freeing up spectrum and removing barriers to spectrum use and broadband build-out. The Commission under Genachowski's leadership developed a bold "incentive auctions" initiative to deploy market forces to reallocate broadcast spectrum from inefficient uses to flexible mobile broadband, which was signed into law in February 2012. The Commission also ordered the largest release of unlicensed spectrum in 15 years, building on the approach that gave us Wi-Fi.

Through the Commission's Broadband Acceleration Initiative, Genachowski has advanced policies that reduce the cost and time required to deploy broadband infrastructure, including by streamlining the process for attaching communications equipment to utility poles and siting wireless towers. The agency has also taken strong and balanced steps to preserve Internet freedom and openness, and has worked to ensure that transactions promote competition, drive innovation and economic growth, and benefit consumers.

Internationally, the Commission has worked to free up spectrum for mobile broadband, harmonize global spectrum policies, facilitate open market access for cloud computing, and promote greater Internet freedom, working with international organizations and through bilateral engagement with both major economies and developing countries.

Genachowski is committed to closing the nationwide broadband adoption gap. He has spearheaded a number of initiatives focused on broadband adoption and consumer empowerment, including the Connect to Compete program, which will provide job training and low-cost, high-quality laptops and broadband to low-income Americans; the Jobs4America initiative, which has been executing on its goal of bringing more than 100,000 new broadband-enabled contact center jobs to the U.S. over two years; and worked with wireless providers to end “bill shock” and empower consumers with alerts for wireless voice and data overages. The Commission has also launched a series of cybersecurity initiatives, including the Small Biz Cyber Planner, which enables small businesses to develop a plan to protect themselves from cyber threats.

The Commission has also worked to significantly improve the accessibility of technology and media, including by ensuring that people with disabilities can more easily use online communications services and content.

The Commission is also working to harness modern communications technologies for public safety. On an accelerated schedule, the FCC is implementing PLAN, the new nationwide mobile emergency alerting system; it is working toward an interoperable nationwide mobile broadband network for first responders; and it is charting the transition to Next Generation 9-1-1 services, which will harness the latest communications technology – like the ability to send photos, videos, or texts – to revolutionize emergency response and save lives.

The FCC under Genachowski’s leadership has been a model for excellence in government, including being named the most improved agency in the federal government by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management based on government-wide employee surveys.

Prior to his FCC appointment, Genachowski spent more than a decade working in the technology and media industries as an executive, investor, and board member. He was Chief of Business Operations and before that General Counsel at IAC/InterActiveCorp; Special Advisor at the private equity firm General Atlantic; and co-founder of the technology incubator LaunchBox Digital.

Genachowski’s confirmation returned him to the agency where, in the 1990s, he served as Chief Counsel to Chairman Reed Hundt, as well as Special Counsel to General Counsel William Kennard (later FCC Chairman, 1997-2001). He has served as a U.S. Supreme Court law clerk for two years, for Justice David Souter and Justice William J. Brennan, Jr., and as a clerk for Chief Judge Abner Mikva of the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Genachowski worked in Congress on the staff of the House select committee investigating the Iran-Contra affair, and for then-U.S. Representative (now Senator) Charles E. Schumer.

Genachowski received a J.D., magna cum laude, from Harvard Law School in 1991, and served as co-Notes Editor of the Harvard Law Review. In 1985, he received a B.A. from Columbia College, magna cum laude, where he was Editor of Columbia Spectator’s Broadway Magazine; re-established Columbia’s oldest newspaper Acta Columbiana; and was a writer and researcher for Fred Friendly, former President of CBS News. He was also a certified Emergency Medical

Technician, served on the Columbia Area Volunteer Ambulance, and taught cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

President Obama nominated Chairman Genachowski in March 2009, and he was confirmed by the Senate on June 29, 2009. He serves on the Council of the Administrative Conference of the United States. President Obama also named Genachowski to lead the United States delegation to Poland for the commemoration of the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

A son of immigrants, Genachowski is married to Rachel Goslins and has three children.