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SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

JOINT ECONOMIC

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 1, 2014

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The Honorable Tom Wheeler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
450 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I understand that the Federal Communications Commission is making efforts to modernize the E-rate program. In your efforts to improve E-rate, I believe that the FCC should maintain those aspects of the program that are already effective, important to my constituents, and vital to the future of education.

Web hosting provides an important service. School websites enabled by modern web hosting services are dynamic hubs from which schools perform critical educational functions. Today's school websites are powerful tools to support community engagement, emergency communication, parental involvement, and digital learning initiatives.

School administrators tell me that if web hosting services were de-funded, so called "free services" would be unacceptable as substitutes due to the unique needs of and concerns related to child privacy, advertising, and security. Without E-rate support for web-hosting, districts might have to make cuts in other areas of their already-strained budgets to find the means to pay for their service.

Web hosting involves only 1% of E-rate funds and is among the most cost-effective services funded by E-rate. School leaders report that phasing out support for web hosting would create a significant financial hardship for their districts due to their very limited budgets. These applicants would need to find additional resources to pay for their non-discounted share of broadband services, which would undermine the achievement of the FCC's broadband goals.

As the Commission works to modernize E-rate, I urge you to maintain web hosting. I believe that this step will allow the FCC to maximize its positive impact on America's schools and the future of education. Thank you for your consideration of my views.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States