



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Derek Kilmer  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1429 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kilmer:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

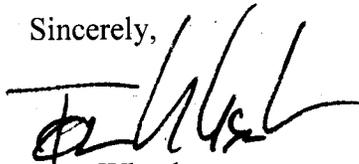
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the E-rate program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Tony Cardenas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1508 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cardenas:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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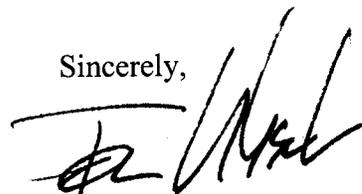
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Suzan DelBene  
U.S. House of Representatives  
318 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman DelBene:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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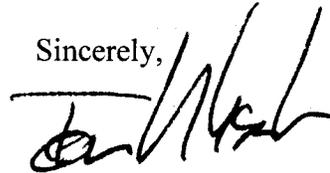
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Susan Davis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1526 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Davis:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

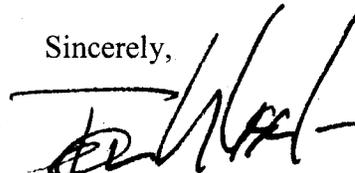
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Steve Israel  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2457 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Israel:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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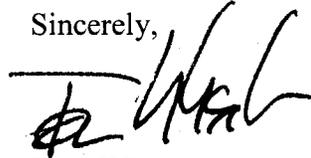
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Tom Wheeler



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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Rush Holt  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1214 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Holt:

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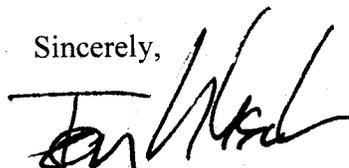
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Ron Kind  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1502 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kind:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

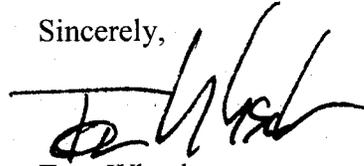
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Ron Barber  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1029 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Barber:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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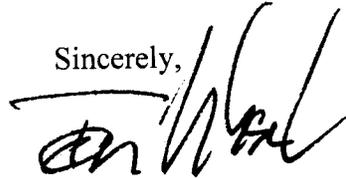
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Richard Hanna  
U.S. House of Representatives  
319 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hanna:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

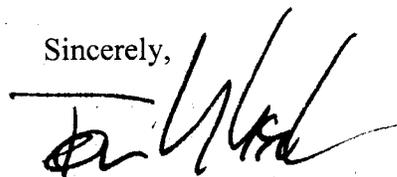
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Pete Gallego  
U.S. House of Representatives  
431 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gallego:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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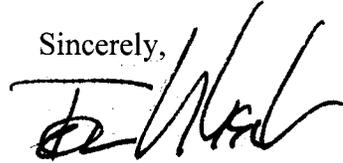
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Lois Capps  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2231 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Capps:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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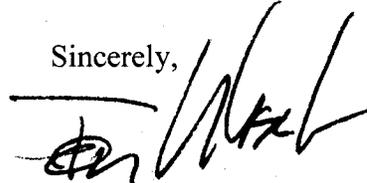
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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable John Delaney  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1632 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Delaney:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

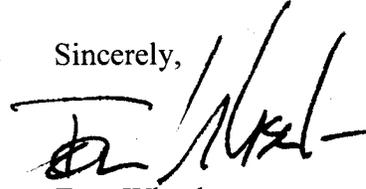
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable John Carney  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1406 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Carney:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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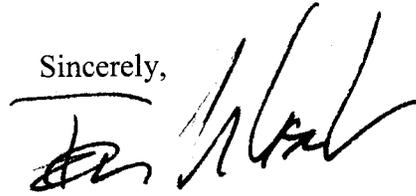
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Joe Garcia  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1440 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Garcia:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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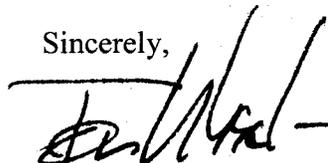
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the E-rate program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Jim Himes  
U.S. House of Representatives  
119 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Himes:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

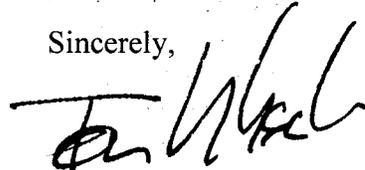
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Jim Cooper  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1536 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Cooper:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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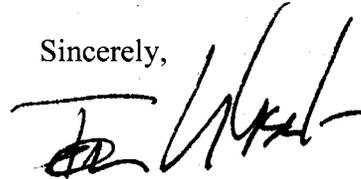
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Gerry Connolly  
U.S. House of Representatives  
424 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Connolly:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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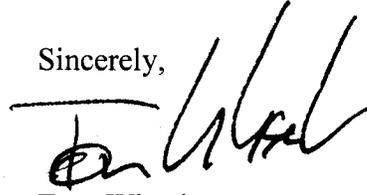
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Elizabeth Esty  
U.S. House of Representatives  
509 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Esty:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

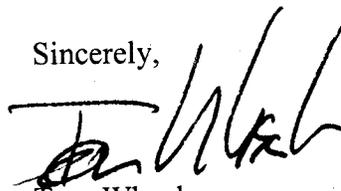
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,



Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Eliot Engel  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2161 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Engel:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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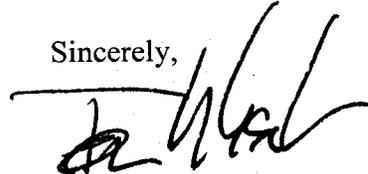
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Denny Heck  
U.S. House of Representatives  
425 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Heck:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

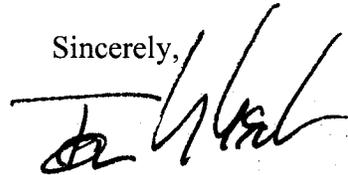
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Christopher Gibson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1708 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Gibson:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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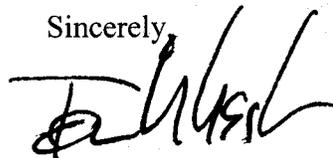
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Charles Dent  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1009 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Dent:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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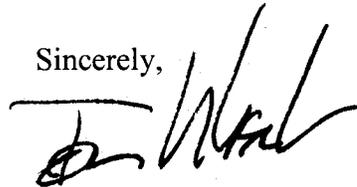
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Bill Foster  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1224 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Foster:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

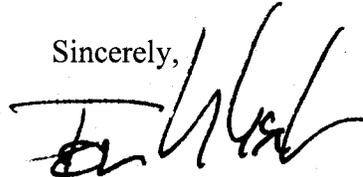
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable André Carson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2453 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Carson:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

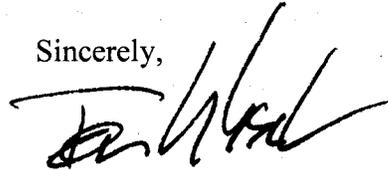
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Ami Bera  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1408 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Bera:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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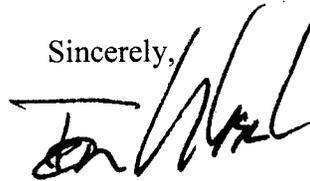
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the E-rate program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "W".

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Adam Kinzinger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1221 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Kinzinger:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

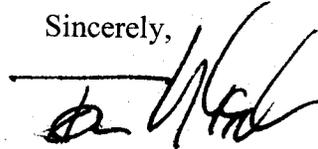
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the E-rate program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", written over a horizontal line.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Don Young  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2314 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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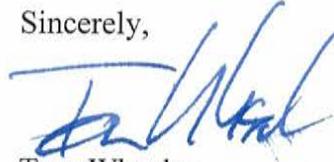
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
U.S. House of Representatives  
118 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Wasserman Schultz:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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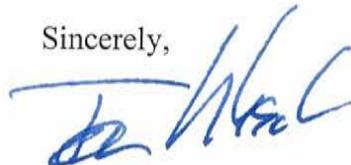
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Juan Vargas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1605 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Vargas:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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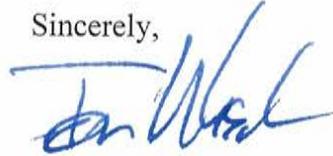
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable David Scott  
U.S. House of Representatives  
225 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

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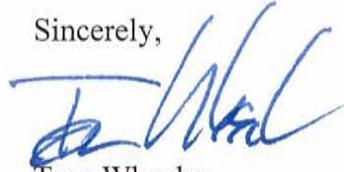
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Kurt Schrader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
108 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schrader:

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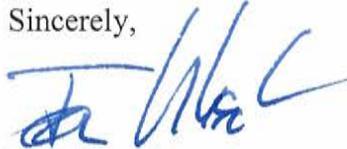
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Brad Schneider  
U.S. House of Representatives  
317 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schneider:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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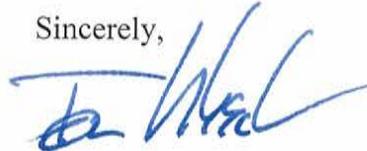
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OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Kurt Schrader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
108 Cannon House Office Building  
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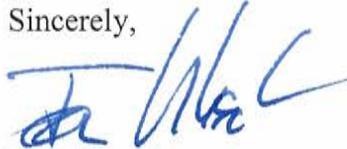
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The Honorable David Scott  
U.S. House of Representatives  
225 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Scott:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

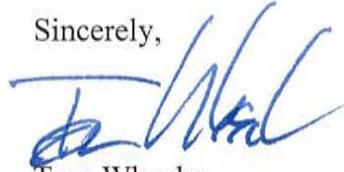
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish above the name.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Juan Vargas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1605 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Vargas:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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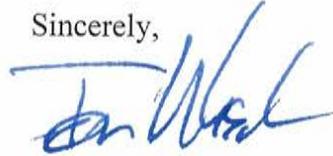
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E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
U.S. House of Representatives  
118 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Wasserman Schultz:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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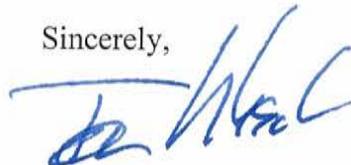
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler", with a stylized flourish above the name.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Don Young  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2314 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

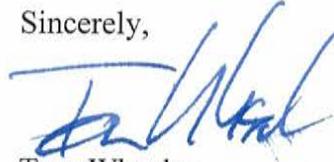
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Adam Schiff  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2411 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Schiff:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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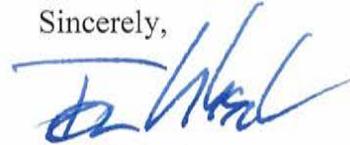
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Loretta Sanchez  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1114 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Sanchez:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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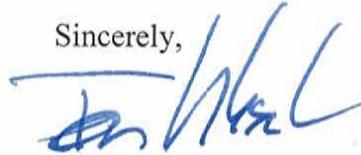
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Michael Quigley  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1124 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Quigley:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

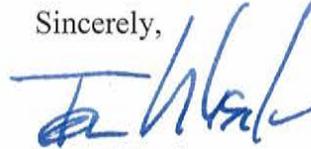
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Murphy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1517 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Murphy:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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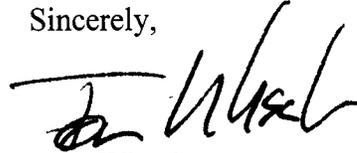
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Bobby Rush  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2268 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Rush:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

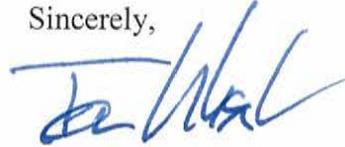
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Scott Peters  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2410 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Peters:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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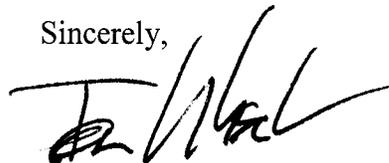
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Markwayne Mullin  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1113 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Mullin:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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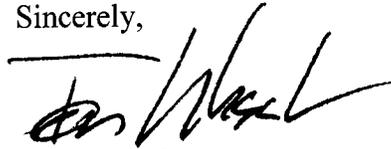
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Jared Polis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1433 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Polis:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

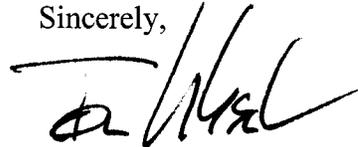
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Gary Peters  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1609 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Peters:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

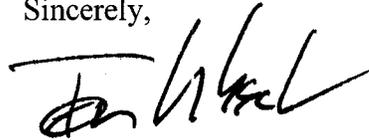
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1410 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Perlmutter:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

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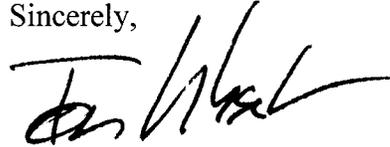
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Carolyn McCarthy  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2346 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman McCarthy:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

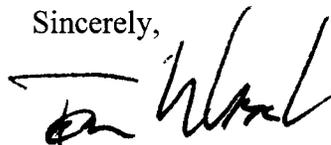
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As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Bill Owens  
U.S. House of Representatives  
405 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Owens:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

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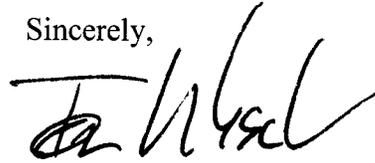
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Tom Wheeler



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Ann Kuster  
U.S. House of Representatives  
137 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Kuster:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

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In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

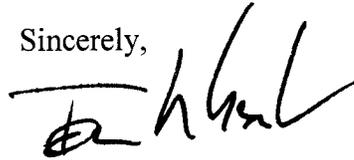
As a first step, I believe we should put those resources to work now to meet our educators’ pent-up demand for upgrading Wi-Fi. But how and when we put those resources to work is very important. According to internal staff estimates, allocating an additional \$1 billion to Wi-Fi next year without updated program rules will allow us to reach fewer than 4 million students, mostly in urban areas. With modernized rules for internal connections, however, E-Rate could help over 10 million students connect to Wi-Fi in their classrooms, including many in rural areas. It would also support Wi-Fi deployment in substantially more libraries than in the past. But timing is critical. Practically speaking, to have an impact in the 2015 school year, the Commission will need to act this summer to adopt new rules. If we don’t move quickly on new rules, we will miss the opportunity for Wi-Fi to have its greatest impact in the coming funding year.

As you correctly point out, there are several other important issues. My focus on Wi-Fi is not to suggest that other steps should not also be taken to modernize the program. I agree that we need to make the hard decision now to begin transitioning the program away from non-broadband services and to broadband services. I also share your goal of ensuring that these funds are spent wisely on the best service at the lowest price in order to stretch these funds to reach as many schools as possible. It is called the *E-rate* program for a reason, and it is our responsibility to facilitate access to the best possible services at the lowest possible rates. We can take specific actions to address this issue by, for example, facilitating consortium-based applications and requiring greater transparency in the program so that all E-rate beneficiaries have the best possible information when making purchasing decisions. I am also firmly committed to streamlining the application process. Today, for example, I am pleased to say that the Commission has already committed over \$1 billion for the 2014 funding year, which

includes over \$700 million in broadband-related funding – a milestone that has been achieved a full three months faster than in the previous funding year.

E-rate modernization is one of the most important issues before the Commission today. We have an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of millions of students. Thank you again for your very helpful recommendations. I look forward to working with you toward our mutual goal of increased access to high-speed broadband in our nation's schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Wheeler". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

June 16, 2014

The Honorable Ann Kirkpatrick  
U.S. House of Representatives  
330 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Kirkpatrick:

Thank you for sharing your views on the importance of modernizing the E-Rate program to provide high-speed broadband to and within all of our nation's schools and libraries. I agree with each of the recommendations in your letter and hope to soon be able to adopt an Order beginning the process of E-rate modernization consistent with the approach you have outlined.

Since its creation as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the E-Rate program has provided crucial support to meet the technology needs of schools and libraries. But just as technology and teaching have evolved over the past two decades, so too must E-Rate. The technology tools that supported the educational needs of the Class of 1998 bear virtually no resemblance to those the Classes of 2015 and beyond need to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

I am especially concerned about the lack of robust Wi-Fi in schools and libraries. Unfortunately, nearly 60% of schools in America lack sufficient Wi-Fi to provide their students and teachers with modern educational tools, and far too many schools simply have no Wi-Fi at all. The current E-rate program rules are simply not set up to meet this challenge. In the most recent funding year, no E-Rate funding was allocated to Wi-Fi. In previous years, when funds were available, E-Rate supported internal connections like Wi-Fi to less than 10 percent of schools and just one percent of libraries, with rural schools consistently receiving a very small percentage of funding for in-classroom connectivity. This is unacceptable.

The main reason for this problem is that there is no certainty within the current system. Schools do not know if they will qualify from year to year. Funds for Wi-Fi are provided on a secondary basis and are only available once all "priority one" requests are funded. I have seen firsthand that Wi-Fi is as important as any other form of Internet access in today's schools and libraries and believe the E-rate program should provide substantially greater predictability in funding for Wi-Fi going forward. Every school district and library should know that funding for Wi-Fi will be available to them over a multi-year period so they can effectively plan for the future. Far more rural schools would benefit compared to the current system and such changes could be made while

maintaining a hallmark of the E-rate program – providing the highest discounts for those schools that need it the most and providing an additional discount for certain rural schools.

In addition to rethinking how we provide support for Wi-Fi, we also need to address funding levels. Just last week I received a letter from 106 organizations calling for an increase in E-rate spending and noting that “the program has effectively been shortchanged by not having any CPI [consumer price index] increase for the first fourteen years of the program.” Others have also called for an inflation adjustment to the program’s budget. Had such a rule been in place when the program was launched, the Commission would provide approximately \$3.25 billion in E-rate support in the upcoming funding year. I am pleased to say that, due to efforts of the Commission’s staff this year in improving the overall management and administration of the E-rate program, funds will be made available that can be put to use to enable the Commission to provide more than that CPI-adjusted level of funding in 2015. As I announced earlier this year, using these already collected funds, the Commission will invest an additional \$2 billion in broadband for schools and libraries while continuing to assess the long-term funding needs of the program.

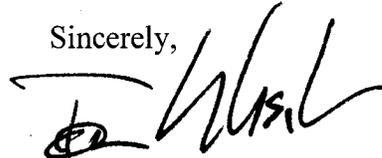
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Tom Wheeler