

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**552**

June 2, 2014

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner Rosenworcel, Commissioner Pai, and Commissioner O’Rielly:

As Members of Congress committed to improving our education system through innovation and preparing our students for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs, we write in support of modernizing the E-rate program to help connect our nation’s schools and libraries to high-speed broadband over the next five years. America’s schools and libraries are in need of a technological update to accelerate next-generation education reforms, support teachers, and enhance student learning through universal access to high-speed broadband. Technology has dramatically changed since the E-rate program was established 18 years ago, and the funding priorities must reflect the changing nature of the Internet, so that our classrooms and students have access to today’s technology.

Closing the education and access gap starts with extending digital opportunities across America to all of our students. This requires ensuring that our schools and libraries can take advantage of new technologies and high-quality educational content. However, many of our schools do not have the Internet speed needed to take advantage of digital learning opportunities. Experts agree that to enable students to take full advantage of digital learning, America’s schools should aim for 100 Mbps of bandwidth or more for every 1,000 students and staff members today, and 1 Gbps by 2017. The E-rate program has the ability to make these updates and bring our Internet services in line with global, competitive standards. Fifty major CEOs recognize the importance of updating this program for American competitiveness, and stated so in a similar letter to the FCC earlier this year.

Improving our education system and preparing our students for 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs is a bipartisan priority. We are proud to support, in a bipartisan manner, the recommended update to the E-rate program. We believe the FCC should:

1. Focus E-rate on broadband services, Wi-Fi updates, and filling the infrastructure gap, with continued support for connectivity services, to ensure universal access to the most up to date technology;
2. Ensure that schools and libraries are paying for the best service at the lowest price through competitive Internet service offerings and purchaser coordination, so that the program’s money is spent smarter and spread wider;
3. Increase transparency and accountability for the program in order to reduce costs, share data collected to improve best practices, and ensure that all students have access to the connectivity they need;

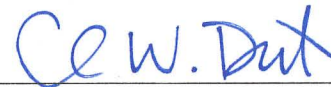
4. Ensure that program rules result in funding stability to improve program efficiency and schools' financial planning, particularly for broadband connections within schools and libraries (particularly Wi-Fi) where there has been a lack of certainty in the past; and
5. Simplify and streamline the application process.

As a recent Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development report found, the United States is behind most developed countries in digital literacy skills. In order to improve our digital literacy skills, we must begin by ensuring reliable and universal access to the Internet in our classrooms and libraries. Therefore, we urge the Commission to move forward on modernizing the E-rate program and increase access to high-speed broadband for our students.

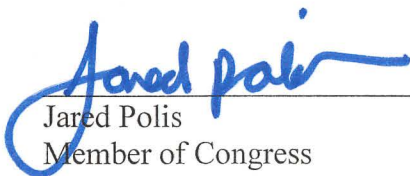
Sincerely,



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



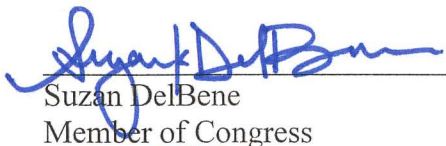
Charles W. Dent  
Member of Congress



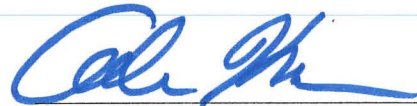
Jared Polis  
Member of Congress



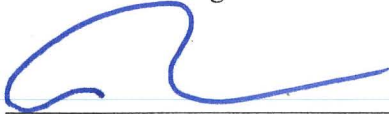
Chris Gibson  
Member of Congress



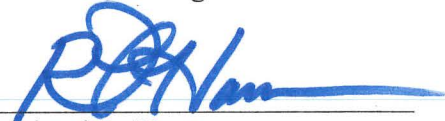
Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney  
Member of Congress



Richard L. Hanna  
Member of Congress



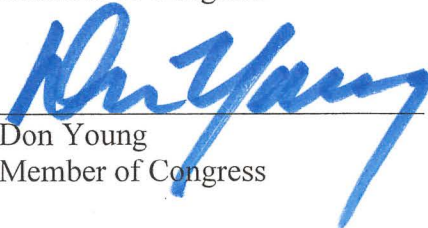
Joe Garcia  
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress

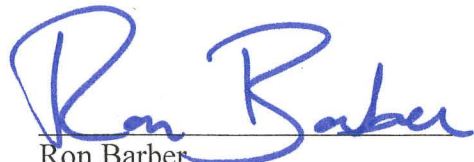


Scott Peters  
Member of Congress



Don Young  
Member of Congress





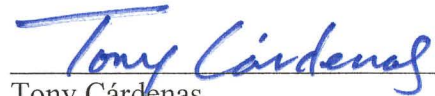
Ron Barber  
Member of Congress



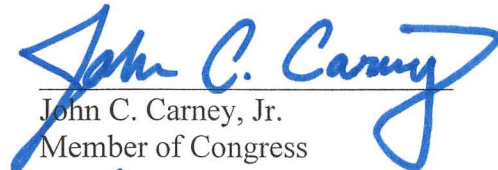
Ami Bera, M.D.  
Member of Congress



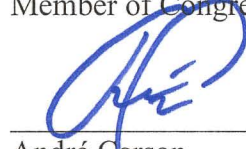
Lois Capps  
Member of Congress



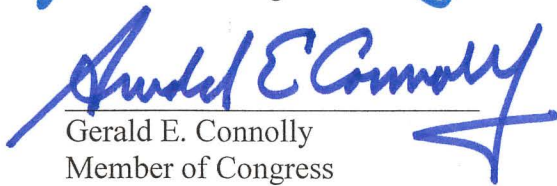
Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



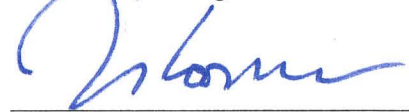
John C. Carney, Jr.  
Member of Congress



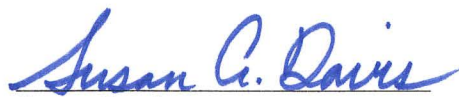
André Carson  
Member of Congress



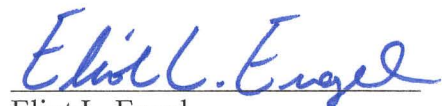
Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



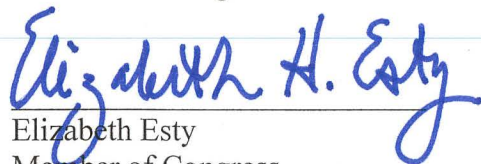
Jim Cooper  
Member of Congress



Susan Davis  
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel  
Member of Congress



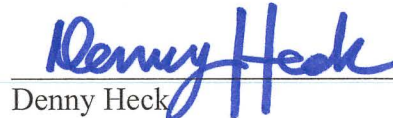
Elizabeth Esty  
Member of Congress



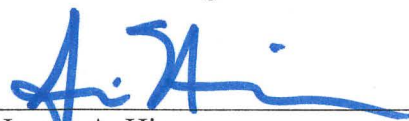
Bill Foster  
Member of Congress



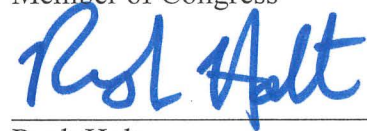
Pete Gallego  
Member of Congress



Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



James A. Himes  
Member of Congress



Rush Holt  
Member of Congress



Steve Israel  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick  
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



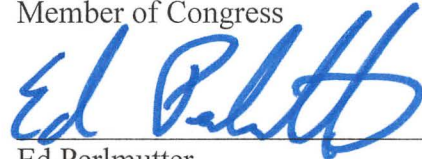
Carolyn McCarthy  
Member of Congress



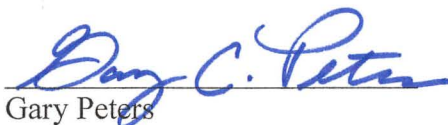
Patrick Murphy  
Member of Congress



William Owens  
Member of Congress



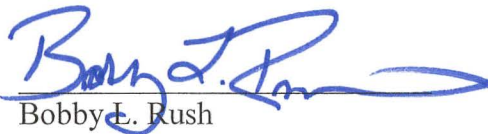
Ed Perlmutter  
Member of Congress



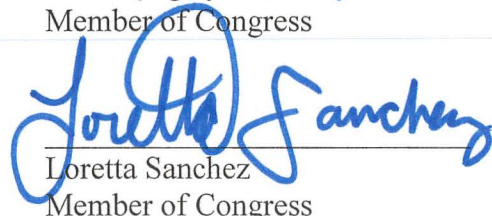
Gary Peters  
Member of Congress



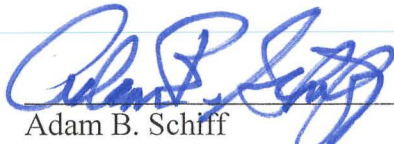
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress



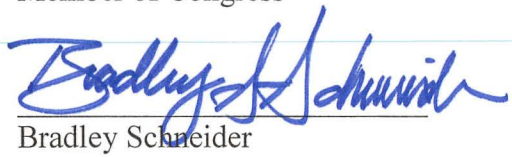
Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress



Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress



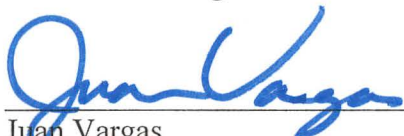
Bradley Schneider  
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader  
Member of Congress



David Scott  
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress