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9TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

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FCC Mailroom

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

Thank you for your commitment to making investments in our nation's infrastructure and broadband connectivity. I am writing to express support for the Universal Service Program for Schools and Libraries, commonly known as E-Rate.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, high-speed internet is an essential service for homes, businesses, and schools alike. Unfortunately, many rural Americans still lack sufficient broadband infrastructure to take advantage of the benefits connectivity provides. Funding for programs such as E-Rate helps to bridge the digital divide that separates rural communities like those in Southwest Virginia from the rest of the country.

In line with the long-established Universal Service Fund model, the E-Rate program provides annual funds to public libraries and K-12 public and private schools to assist in providing access to broadband connectivity and robust internal WI-FI. Reliable internet access provides advantages to students including distance learning, online assessments, and web-based homework, among others.

It is my understanding that the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) may be considering cuts to E-Rate Category Two funding. I am concerned that cuts to this funding would reverse positive steps taken to ensure that students have the necessary tools to succeed. E-Rate is critical to providing students the advantages new information technologies provide. With the foregoing in mind, I ask that you continue your support for E-Rate and the connectivity services it supplies.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure that students have the skills and experiences necessary to be successful in the future.

Sincerely,

H. Morgan Griffith  
Member of Congress