



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable John N. Kennedy
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
S-128 The Capital Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Kennedy:

On July 29, 2019, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly released a report entitled *FCC Should Assess Making Off-School-Premises Access Eligible for Additional Federal Support*, GAO 19-564 (Off-Premises Wireless Access Report).³ GAO was asked to review wireless Internet access for school-age children in lower-income households. The Off-Premises Wireless Access Report examines (1) challenges lower-income school-age children who lack in-home fixed broadband face in doing homework that involves Internet access and (2) selected school districts' efforts to expand wireless access for students and the federal role in those efforts. GAO also examined prior FCC efforts to expand wireless access for students and compared them to federal internal control standards and pilot-program design best practices.

The Off-Premises Wireless Access Report recommends that the Commission determine and execute a methodology for collecting and analyzing data "to assess the potential benefits, costs, and challenges of making off-premises access eligible for E-Rate program support," and publish the results of its analysis. In a July 15, 2019 response to a draft of the Off-Premises Wireless Access Report, the Chief of the Wireline Competition Bureau (Bureau) agreed with GAO's recommendation, and explained the Commission's plans for addressing the recommendation. I tasked the Commission's Office of Economics and Analytics, in consultation with the Bureau, to assess the potential benefits and costs of, and other policy issues involved in, making off-premises wireless broadband access eligible for E-Rate program support. To this end, Commission staff is currently undertaking the analysis of a 2011-2012 E-Rate pilot program, which involved a similar approach. I will ensure that FCC staff publish a report that evaluates the results of this pilot program. As the Bureau Chief noted in her response to GAO, we will evaluate such data for lessons learned (accounting for changes in technology, costs, and student learning over the past eight years) before taking any further steps.

Closing the digital divide is my top priority, and the Commission's E-Rate program plays a critical role in addressing this issue by facilitating and promoting increased broadband deployment to our nation's schools and libraries. As Commission staff undertakes this analysis, and as noted in the Bureau Chief's response to GAO, we will remain mindful of limits of the Commission's authority under sections 254(h)(1)(B) and 254(h)(2) of the Communications Act, which require respectively that services be provided for "educational purposes" and that rules "enhance, to the extent technically feasible and

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Page 2 – The Honorable John N. Kennedy

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I appreciate the GAO’s thorough analysis and recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Off-Premises Wireless Access Report, and please let me know if you require further assistance on this subject.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney
Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Maloney:

On July 29, 2019, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly released a report entitled *FCC Should Assess Making Off-School-Premises Access Eligible for Additional Federal Support*, GAO 19-564 (Off-Premises Wireless Access Report).¹² GAO was asked to review wireless Internet access for school-age children in lower-income households. The Off-Premises Wireless Access Report examines (1) challenges lower-income school-age children who lack in-home fixed broadband face in doing homework that involves Internet access and (2) selected school districts' efforts to expand wireless access for students and the federal role in those efforts. GAO also examined prior FCC efforts to expand wireless access for students and compared them to federal internal control standards and pilot-program design best practices.

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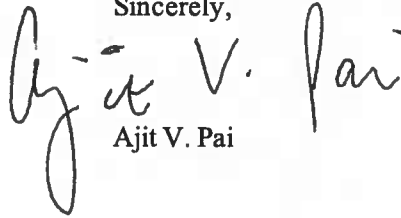
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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December 3, 2019

The Honorable Chris Coons
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Coons:

On July 29, 2019, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) publicly released a report entitled *FCC Should Assess Making Off-School-Premises Access Eligible for Additional Federal Support*, GAO 19-564 (Off-Premises Wireless Access Report).⁴ GAO was asked to review wireless Internet access for school-age children in lower-income households. The Off-Premises Wireless Access Report examines (1) challenges lower-income school-age children who lack in-home fixed broadband face in doing homework that involves Internet access and (2) selected school districts' efforts to expand wireless access for students and the federal role in those efforts. GAO also examined prior FCC efforts to expand wireless access for students and compared them to federal internal control standards and pilot-program design best practices.

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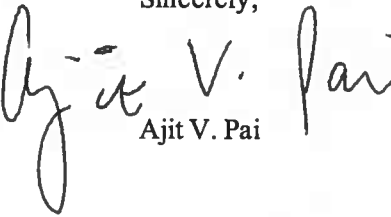
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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December 3, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

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Ajit V. Pai
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WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable Gary Peters
Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
442 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

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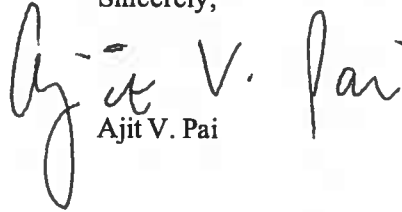
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Ajit V. Pai





FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Walden:

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Ajit V. Pai

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives
2471 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Jordan:

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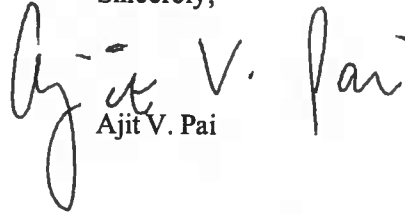
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Ajit V. Pai





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December 3, 2019

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
425 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

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December 3, 2019

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
U.S. House of Representatives
2000 Rayburn House Office Building (G Floor)
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Quigley:

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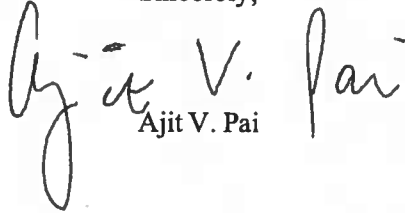
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December 3, 2019

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker:

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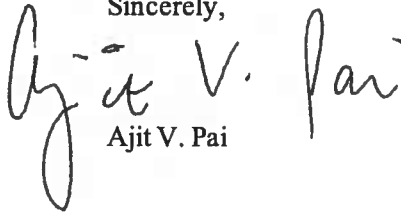
Closing the digital divide is my top priority, and the Commission's E-Rate program plays a critical role in addressing this issue by facilitating and promoting increased broadband deployment to our nation's schools and libraries. As Commission staff undertakes this analysis, and as noted in the Bureau Chief's response to GAO, we will remain mindful of limits of the Commission's authority under sections 254(h)(1)(B) and 254(h)(2) of the Communications Act, which require respectively that services be provided for "educational purposes" and that rules "enhance, to the extent technically feasible and economically reasonable, access to advanced telecommunications and information services for . . . school classrooms . . . and libraries."

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Page 2 – The Honorable Roger Wicker

I appreciate the GAO's thorough analysis and recommendation. Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Off-Premises Wireless Access Report, and please let me know if you require further assistance on this subject.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable Ron Johnson
Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
United States Senate
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Johnson:

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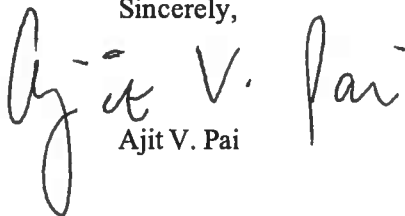
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

December 3, 2019

The Honorable Tom Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Graves:

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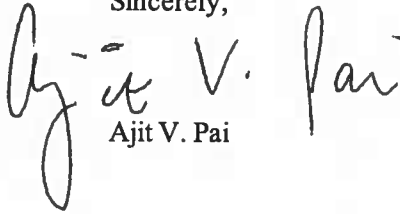
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Ajit V. Pai

