



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Jared Huffman
U.S. House of Representatives
146 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Huffman:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. During this crisis, it is critical that Americans maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing to slow the spread of the corona virus. I'm committed to using every resource at the FCC's disposal to deal with this unprecedented national emergency.

The Commission is working to ensure Americans stay connected with broadband or telephone connectivity during the COVID-19 outbreak. Specifically, I have asked broadband and telephone service providers to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. The Keep Americans Connected Pledge includes a 60-day commitment: (1) not to terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; (2) to waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers may incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and (3) to open a company's Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them. To date, over 500 broadband and telephone service providers across the country, including all of our nation's largest providers, have taken the Pledge and thus agreed to take these concrete steps to help Americans stay connected for the next 60 days.

I have also asked companies to go above and beyond the Pledge and take additional steps to maintain connectivity during the pandemic. For example, I have asked broadband providers to improve their low-income broadband programs, relax data caps where appropriate, and enhance remote learning and telehealth opportunities. I am pleased with the response that I have received. For example, Comcast is increasing broadband speeds for Internet Essentials (low-income) customers from 15 Mbps to 25 Mbps, offering broadband service for free for 60 days to new Internet Essentials customers, and offering all customers unlimited data for 60 days. AT&T is providing all consumer home Internet wireline customers, as well as Fixed Wireless Internet customers, with unlimited Internet data. It is also expanding eligibility to its Access from AT&T (low-income) program to households participating in the National School Lunch Program and Head Start and offering new Access from AT&T customers two months of free service. Charter is offering up to 100 Mbps broadband service for free for 60 days to new households with K-12 and/or college students and waiving installation fees for such households. And Verizon is tripling the data usage limit for students in Title I schools that are part of the Verizon Innovative Learning Program and committing an additional \$10 million to nonprofits supporting students and first responders.

The Commission has also taken a number of steps to help meet connectivity needs through the Universal Service Fund. For example, the Commission unanimously adopted my

The Commission has also taken a number of steps to help meet connectivity needs through the Universal Service Fund. For example, the Commission unanimously adopted my February proposal to fully fund all eligible Rural Health Care (RHC) Program services for the current funding year with an additional \$42.19 million in funding. On March 26, we took additional action to assist RHC Program participants, including extending the Rural Health Care Program application window until June 30, 2020, easing competitive bidding requirements for health care providers with expiring evergreen contracts, and extending deadlines for responses to inquiries from the Universal Service Administrative Company. The Commission's action will help ensure that rural healthcare providers have the resources, as well as the flexibility, they need to promote telehealth solutions for their patients.

We have waived gift rules governing the Rural Health Care and E-Rate programs until September 30, 2020 to enable service providers to offer, and hospitals, schools, and libraries to solicit and accept, improved connections or additional equipment for telemedicine or remote learning during the coronavirus outbreak. And the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau made clear that schools and libraries that are closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak are permitted to allow the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property. These critical actions will make it easier for broadband providers to support telehealth and remote learning efforts during the pandemic. To assist E-Rate participants, we also extended the E-Rate application filing window for Fiscal Year 2020 to April 29, 2020 to address potential delays caused by COVID-19.

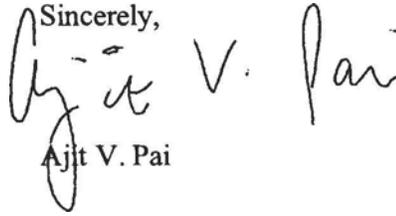
We have also waived the Lifeline program's recertification and reverification requirements for participating low-income consumers for 60 days and waived for 60 days the requirement that participating carriers' enrollment representatives register with the Lifeline program administrator, the Universal Service Administrative Company. These changes will ease burdens on Lifeline subscribers during the coronavirus pandemic and allow Lifeline carriers to focus their efforts on assisting customers.

Moreover, we have quickly granted Special Temporary Authority to AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon as well as a large number of wireless Internet service providers to use additional spectrum to meet customer demand for mobile broadband across the United States, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. And we have granted Telecommunications Relay Service providers temporary waivers to better enable American Sign Language interpreters to work from home in order to maintain relay services during the pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or have a speech disability.

The Commission is also hard at work fulfilling its mission to protect consumers. We recently launched a COVID-19 Consumer Warnings and Safety Tips webpage, <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>, to alert consumers to the proliferation of scam phone calls and texts related to the coronavirus pandemic. Scammers are promoting bogus cures, offering fake test kits, sending hoax text messages, and generally preying on virus-related fears.

Finally, the Commission has been working with Congress to secure the necessary authority and funding to address medical care gaps and enhance connectivity in various cities

and towns potentially affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. For example, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act contains a \$200 million appropriation for the agency to support telehealth and telemedicine services. The FCC has already begun preparing for this bill to become law, and I am thankful for this opportunity to work with you and your colleagues to serve the American public.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Donald Payne
U.S. House of Representatives
132 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Payne:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. During this crisis, it is critical that Americans maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing to slow the spread of the corona virus. I'm committed to using every resource at the FCC's disposal to deal with this unprecedented national emergency.

The Commission is working to ensure Americans stay connected with broadband or telephone connectivity during the COVID-19 outbreak. Specifically, I have asked broadband and telephone service providers to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. The Keep Americans Connected Pledge includes a 60-day commitment: (1) not to terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; (2) to waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers may incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and (3) to open a company's Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them. To date, over 500 broadband and telephone service providers across the country, including all of our nation's largest providers, have taken the Pledge and thus agreed to take these concrete steps to help Americans stay connected for the next 60 days.

I have also asked companies to go above and beyond the Pledge and take additional steps to maintain connectivity during the pandemic. For example, I have asked broadband providers to improve their low-income broadband programs, relax data caps where appropriate, and enhance remote learning and telehealth opportunities. I am pleased with the response that I have received. For example, Comcast is increasing broadband speeds for Internet Essentials (low-income) customers from 15 Mbps to 25 Mbps, offering broadband service for free for 60 days to new Internet Essentials customers, and offering all customers unlimited data for 60 days. AT&T is providing all consumer home Internet wireline customers, as well as Fixed Wireless Internet customers, with unlimited Internet data. It is also expanding eligibility to its Access from AT&T (low-income) program to households participating in the National School Lunch Program and Head Start and offering new Access from AT&T customers two months of free service. Charter is offering up to 100 Mbps broadband service for free for 60 days to new households with K-12 and/or college students and waiving installation fees for such households. And Verizon is tripling the data usage limit for students in Title I schools that are part of the Verizon Innovative Learning Program and committing an additional \$10 million to nonprofits supporting students and first responders.

The Commission has also taken a number of steps to help meet connectivity needs through the Universal Service Fund. For example, the Commission unanimously adopted my

The Commission has also taken a number of steps to help meet connectivity needs through the Universal Service Fund. For example, the Commission unanimously adopted my February proposal to fully fund all eligible Rural Health Care (RHC) Program services for the current funding year with an additional \$42.19 million in funding. On March 26, we took additional action to assist RHC Program participants, including extending the Rural Health Care Program application window until June 30, 2020, easing competitive bidding requirements for health care providers with expiring evergreen contracts, and extending deadlines for responses to inquiries from the Universal Service Administrative Company. The Commission's action will help ensure that rural healthcare providers have the resources, as well as the flexibility, they need to promote telehealth solutions for their patients.

We have waived gift rules governing the Rural Health Care and E-Rate programs until September 30, 2020 to enable service providers to offer, and hospitals, schools, and libraries to solicit and accept, improved connections or additional equipment for telemedicine or remote learning during the coronavirus outbreak. And the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau made clear that schools and libraries that are closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak are permitted to allow the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property. These critical actions will make it easier for broadband providers to support telehealth and remote learning efforts during the pandemic. To assist E-Rate participants, we also extended the E-Rate application filing window for Fiscal Year 2020 to April 29, 2020 to address potential delays caused by COVID-19.

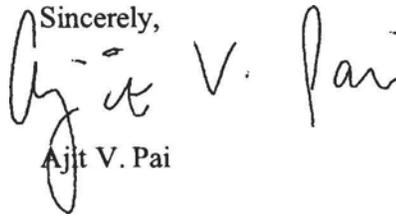
We have also waived the Lifeline program's recertification and reverification requirements for participating low-income consumers for 60 days and waived for 60 days the requirement that participating carriers' enrollment representatives register with the Lifeline program administrator, the Universal Service Administrative Company. These changes will ease burdens on Lifeline subscribers during the coronavirus pandemic and allow Lifeline carriers to focus their efforts on assisting customers.

Moreover, we have quickly granted Special Temporary Authority to AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon as well as a large number of wireless Internet service providers to use additional spectrum to meet customer demand for mobile broadband across the United States, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. And we have granted Telecommunications Relay Service providers temporary waivers to better enable American Sign Language interpreters to work from home in order to maintain relay services during the pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or have a speech disability.

The Commission is also hard at work fulfilling its mission to protect consumers. We recently launched a COVID-19 Consumer Warnings and Safety Tips webpage, <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>, to alert consumers to the proliferation of scam phone calls and texts related to the coronavirus pandemic. Scammers are promoting bogus cures, offering fake test kits, sending hoax text messages, and generally preying on virus-related fears.

Finally, the Commission has been working with Congress to secure the necessary authority and funding to address medical care gaps and enhance connectivity in various cities

and towns potentially affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. For example, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act contains a \$200 million appropriation for the agency to support telehealth and telemedicine services. The FCC has already begun preparing for this bill to become law, and I am thankful for this opportunity to work with you and your colleagues to serve the American public.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 30, 2020

The Honorable Darren Soto
U.S. House of Representatives
1429 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Soto:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. During this crisis, it is critical that Americans maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing to slow the spread of the corona virus. I'm committed to using every resource at the FCC's disposal to deal with this unprecedented national emergency.

The Commission is working to ensure Americans stay connected with broadband or telephone connectivity during the COVID-19 outbreak. Specifically, I have asked broadband and telephone service providers to take the Keep Americans Connected Pledge. The Keep Americans Connected Pledge includes a 60-day commitment: (1) not to terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic; (2) to waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers may incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and (3) to open a company's Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them. To date, over 500 broadband and telephone service providers across the country, including all of our nation's largest providers, have taken the Pledge and thus agreed to take these concrete steps to help Americans stay connected for the next 60 days.

I have also asked companies to go above and beyond the Pledge and take additional steps to maintain connectivity during the pandemic. For example, I have asked broadband providers to improve their low-income broadband programs, relax data caps where appropriate, and enhance remote learning and telehealth opportunities. I am pleased with the response that I have received. For example, Comcast is increasing broadband speeds for Internet Essentials (low-income) customers from 15 Mbps to 25 Mbps, offering broadband service for free for 60 days to new Internet Essentials customers, and offering all customers unlimited data for 60 days. AT&T is providing all consumer home Internet wireline customers, as well as Fixed Wireless Internet customers, with unlimited Internet data. It is also expanding eligibility to its Access from AT&T (low-income) program to households participating in the National School Lunch Program and Head Start and offering new Access from AT&T customers two months of free service. Charter is offering up to 100 Mbps broadband service for free for 60 days to new households with K-12 and/or college students and waiving installation fees for such households. And Verizon is tripling the data usage limit for students in Title I schools that are part of the Verizon Innovative Learning Program and committing an additional \$10 million to nonprofits supporting students and first responders.

The Commission has also taken a number of steps to help meet connectivity needs through the Universal Service Fund. For example, the Commission unanimously adopted my

February proposal to fully fund all eligible Rural Health Care (RHC) Program services for the current funding year with an additional \$42.19 million in funding. On March 26, we took additional action to assist RHC Program participants, including extending the Rural Health Care Program application window until June 30, 2020, easing competitive bidding requirements for health care providers with expiring evergreen contracts, and extending deadlines for responses to inquiries from the Universal Service Administrative Company. The Commission's action will help ensure that rural healthcare providers have the resources, as well as the flexibility, they need to promote telehealth solutions for their patients.

We have waived gift rules governing the Rural Health Care and E-Rate programs until September 30, 2020 to enable service providers to offer, and hospitals, schools, and libraries to solicit and accept, improved connections or additional equipment for telemedicine or remote learning during the coronavirus outbreak. And the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau made clear that schools and libraries that are closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak are permitted to allow the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property. These critical actions will make it easier for broadband providers to support telehealth and remote learning efforts during the pandemic. To assist E-Rate participants, we also extended the E-Rate application filing window for Fiscal Year 2020 to April 29, 2020 to address potential delays caused by COVID-19.

We have also waived the Lifeline program's recertification and reverification requirements for participating low-income consumers for 60 days and waived for 60 days the requirement that participating carriers' enrollment representatives register with the Lifeline program administrator, the Universal Service Administrative Company. These changes will ease burdens on Lifeline subscribers during the coronavirus pandemic and allow Lifeline carriers to focus their efforts on assisting customers.

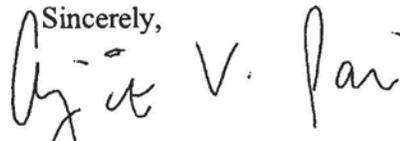
Moreover, we have quickly granted Special Temporary Authority to AT&T, Sprint, T-Mobile, U.S. Cellular, and Verizon as well as a large number of wireless Internet service providers to use additional spectrum to meet customer demand for mobile broadband across the United States, including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. And we have granted Telecommunications Relay Service providers temporary waivers to better enable American Sign Language interpreters to work from home in order to maintain relay services during the pandemic for individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or deaf-blind, or have a speech disability.

The Commission is also hard at work fulfilling its mission to protect consumers. We recently launched a COVID-19 Consumer Warnings and Safety Tips webpage, <https://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams>, to alert consumers to the proliferation of scam phone calls and texts related to the coronavirus pandemic. Scammers are promoting bogus cures, offering fake test kits, sending hoax text messages, and generally preying on virus-related fears.

Finally, the Commission has been working with Congress to secure the necessary authority and funding to address medical care gaps and enhance connectivity in various cities and towns potentially affected by the Coronavirus outbreak. For example, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act contains a \$200 million appropriation for the

Page 3—The Honorable Darren Soto

agency to support telehealth and telemedicine services. The FCC has already begun preparing for this bill to become law, and I am thankful for this opportunity to work with you and your colleagues to serve the American public.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai