

ANTHONY BRINDISI

22ND DISTRICT, NEW YORK

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE
329 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-3665

BINGHAMTON OFFICE
49 COURT ST., SUITE 210
BINGHAMTON, NY 13901
(607) 242-0200

UTICA OFFICE
430 COURT ST., SUITE 102
UTICA, NY 13502
(315) 732-0713

April 13, 2020

303

Chairman Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20054

Dear Chairman Pai,

The actions taken by our nation over the past several weeks to address the COVID-19 pandemic have sharply illustrated the importance of residential and business access to high-speed broadband. In New York State, Governor Cuomo has ordered all non-essential workers to work from home and all schools to be closed through at least April 29th. Across the country, other states have implemented similar “stay at home” orders, and the *President’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America* recommend that all Americans work or engage in schooling from home whenever possible. However, as you know, telework and distance learning are impossible without adequate internet access.

I commend your early action rolling out the *Keep Americans Connected* pledge, and your leadership getting more than 700 companies and associations to agree to abide by its tenets. I agree that it is vital that Internet Service Providers (ISPs) not disconnect residential or small business customers due to an inability to pay; waive any late fees incurred because of the pandemic; and open all their Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

I ask that you now go further in helping Americans stay connected during this trying time. The original *Keep Americans Connected* pledge was for 60 days, starting on March 13. Health officials now anticipate public health measures to last beyond early May, requiring many workers to continue to work from home and many students to continue to use distance learning through the remainder of the school year. **I ask that you please update the pledge to go beyond the initial 60 days and instead last through the duration of the public health emergency.**

I have also heard from countless constituents who have seen their cable and internet bills increase, despite rising unemployment and the necessity of at-home internet access. Those working from home are forced to pay these price increases. Parents have no choice but to take even more from an already-squeezed family budget to pay their rising internet bills, or else their children could no longer participate in online classes.

It is outrageous that, at this time of national sacrifice, some ISPs are raising their rates and charging families even more for service. **In light of this, I ask that you expand the *Keep Americans Connected* pledge to include a commitment to suspend all price increases for the duration of the public health emergency.**

It is essential that customers who are at home on the recommendation of public health officials have adequate access to the internet so they can continue to work and take classes. Thank you for your swift attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony Brindisi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress