



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

June 22, 2020

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
425 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help students stay connected during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Extended school closures due to COVID-19 have led to unprecedented disruption of K-12 education in this country. Schools have had to change the way they teach, and it is critical that parents and students stay connected so that they can participate in online learning from home during this crisis. The FCC aims to enable this transition to remote learning. But we face a major barrier: the Communications Act, which the FCC is duty-bound to administer, expressly limits the FCC's use of E-Rate program funding to broadband and other services delivered to school "classrooms" and libraries. Connectivity and devices supplied to students at home unfortunately do not qualify for E-Rate support under the law.

That's why, since March, I have been working with Congress to appropriate dedicated funding for remote learning—to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and access online educational resources from home. I remain willing to work with you on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed several months ago.

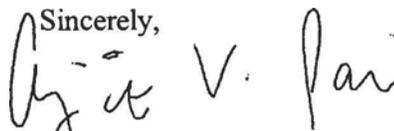
In the meantime, the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act's Education Stabilization Fund provides one avenue for funding for education technology. In the CARES Act, the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund provides more than \$13 billion in grants that elementary and secondary schools can use for purposes that include remote learning. More specifically, this funding can be used to purchase educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity) for students. In addition, the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund makes approximately \$3 billion in emergency block grants available to governors to decide how to best meet the needs of students, and such funds can be used for remote learning. Together, these Funds make \$16 billion available to governors and schools, states and localities, to connect students to remote learning resources. I am pleased that the FCC has been working with Secretary DeVos and the U.S. Department of Education to help schools and school districts across the country learn about the availability of these funds and how they can be used to get our students connected. For example, Commission staff, working with the Universal Service Administrative Company, have leveraged our existing communications channels to share information about this CARES Act funding through stakeholder calls with state E-Rate coordinators, school districts, and Tribal

organizations as well as email blasts that reach approximately 60,000 school, library, and Tribal stakeholders. We have also created a [webpage](#) of information on service providers in each state that have signed the FCC's Keep Americans Connected Pledge and may be able to provide connectivity and devices to schools seeking to use CARES Act funding for remote learning.

Complementing this effort, we have also taken steps to help those schools that participate in the FCC's E-Rate program transition to online learning by waiving and extending several program rules and deadlines. One such waiver of the Commission's gift rule enables service providers to offer, and program participants to solicit and accept, free broadband connections, devices, and other services that support remote learning, which would otherwise be prohibited. Similarly, we have extended a number of E-Rate program deadlines to alleviate administrative and compliance burdens on schools and libraries during the pandemic. This relief includes a 35-day extension of the application filing window for funding year 2020 and, more recently, a one-year extension of the service implementation deadline for special construction to deploy fiber. Additionally, to facilitate community connectivity during the coronavirus pandemic, we clarified that schools and libraries may permit the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks.

Finally, it is important to note that the FCC has been working with the private sector so that students are connected with broadband at home. For example, over 780 broadband and phone service providers have taken the Keep Americans Connected Pledge, and as a result of that Pledge, many households with students have been able to maintain their broadband connectivity. Moreover, we have encouraged providers to go above and beyond the Pledge and many have, including virtually all of the largest broadband providers in the country. As a result, providers are now offering low-cost or free broadband service to households with students who did not previously have broadband access.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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June 22, 2020

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help students stay connected during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Extended school closures due to COVID-19 have led to unprecedented disruption of K-12 education in this country. Schools have had to change the way they teach, and it is critical that parents and students stay connected so that they can participate in online learning from home during this crisis. The FCC aims to enable this transition to remote learning. But we face a major barrier: the Communications Act, which the FCC is duty-bound to administer, expressly limits the FCC's use of E-Rate program funding to broadband and other services delivered to school "classrooms" and libraries. Connectivity and devices supplied to students at home unfortunately do not qualify for E-Rate support under the law.

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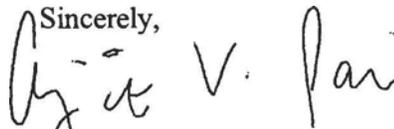
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OFFICE OF
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June 22, 2020

The Honorable Jon Tester
United States Senate
311 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

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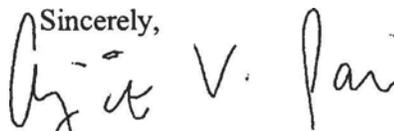
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