



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Anna G. Eshoo  
U.S. House of Representatives  
202 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Eshoo:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Under my leadership, the Commission has taken aggressive action to help ensure that consumers stay connected during this crisis. I called on broadband and telephone service providers to keep Americans connected, and hundreds of providers signed the Keep Americans Connected Pledge and went above and beyond for low-income American families. For example, Starry, Comcast, Cox, Verizon, and Ducor Telephone Co. offered free service to new or existing low-income customers, and Charter offered free service for new subscribing families that included students. Lifeline providers, in turn, were able to go above and beyond the 3 GB minimum service standard, with T-Mobile, TracFone, Q Link, and Claro each offering an additional 5 GB of data per month for Lifeline subscribers, Smith Bagley offering an additional 10 GB of data for subscribers in Tribal areas, and Sprint offering one-time deposits of 20 GB into subscribers' accounts. What is more, Sprint, T-Mobile, TracFone, and Q Link offered Lifeline subscribers unlimited voice minutes and texting.

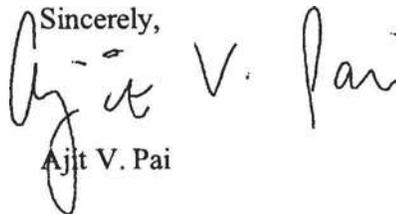
The Commission has also taken repeated action to ensure the Lifeline program is as available as possible to aid low-income American families and veterans impacted by the pandemic. Beginning in March, the Commission waived several rules to increase flexibility in the enrollment process. These changes continue to facilitate access to Lifeline for low-income Americans who lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic, enable applicants residing in Tribal lands to begin receiving service while they complete the application process, and ensure that no current Lifeline subscriber involuntarily loses service during this unprecedented, nationwide public health emergency. In light of the ongoing pandemic, Commission staff have recently extended these waivers until November 30, 2020. In addition to these waivers, the Commission has partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services (including the Administration for Children and Families, the Administration for Community Living, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Indian Health Service, the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), the Department of Veterans Affairs (including the Veterans Health Administration's Homeless Programs Office and Office of Connected Care), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (including the Office of

Field Policy and Management, the Office of Housing, and the Office of Public and Indian Housing), the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Social Security Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the National Institute for Children's Health Quality, and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners to promote Lifeline awareness during the pandemic to ensure that consumers who are newly eligible for the program have the information and resources they need to apply.

Regarding the Lifeline minimum service standards proceeding, the Commission is faced with wildly divergent requests. Some argue for the status quo, demanding that Lifeline subscribers be consigned to just 3 GB of data per month, despite the increased data usage we've all seen during the pandemic. Others argue for an increase to unlimited data. The formula adopted by the prior Administration would increase the minimum to 11.75 GB. In my view, Lifeline subscribers shouldn't receive second-class service, so the status quo is unacceptable. At the same time, a dramatic increase in the standard is likely to disrupt the market, to the detriment of subscribers. As such, I have proposed a modest increase to 4.5 GB, in line with the increases the Commission has successfully overseen over the last few years. Notably, many Lifeline resellers offered (and the majority of Lifeline subscribers had access to) even more data than this in the early months of the pandemic.

To be clear, I agree that more can be done. But with the tax that funds our universal service programs at an all-time high, major new funding initiatives must come from Congress. That's why I have repeatedly called on Congress to establish a Remote Learning Initiative and ensure that every student in this country can access online learning resources as schools are reopening. And that's why I have requested Congress to fund new connectivity programs for individuals and families experiencing economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Broadband Connectivity and Digital Equity Framework proposed by Chairman Roger Wicker of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the U.S. Senate and Ranking Member Greg Walden of the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the U.S. House of Representatives is a forward-thinking proposal to do just that. I urge members to find common ground on broadband funding and other core national priorities and avoid tangential issues that have been stalling progress. We stand ready to work with Congress in this area should there be interest in practical solutions to the communications-related challenges posed by the pandemic.

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

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2231 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Luján:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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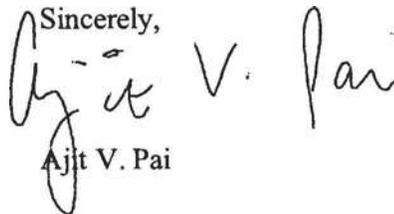
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Ajit V. Pai



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THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 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 Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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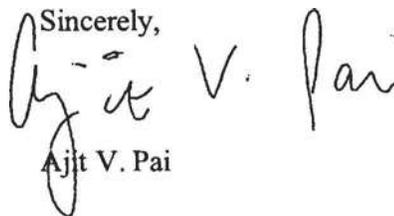
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Diana DeGette  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2368 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman DeGette:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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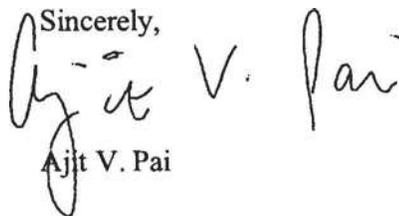
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
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September 3, 2020

The Honorable A. Donald McEachin  
U.S. House of Representatives  
314 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman McEachin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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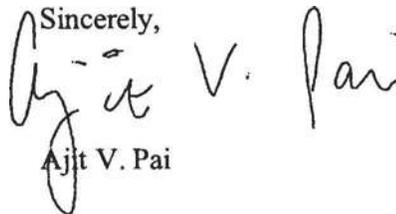
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September 3, 2020

The Honorable Doris Matsui  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2311 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Matsui:

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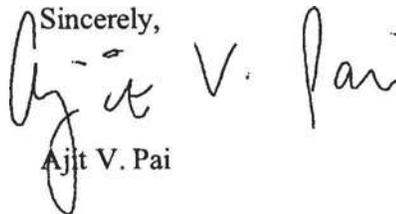
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September 3, 2020

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

Dear Chairman Pallone:

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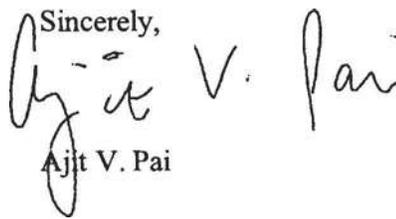
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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable G.K. Butterfield  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2080 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Butterfield:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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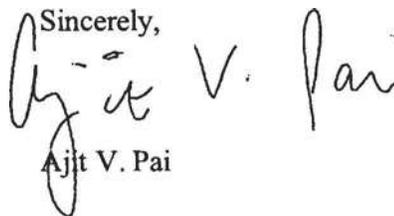
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Jerry McNerney  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2265 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman McNerney:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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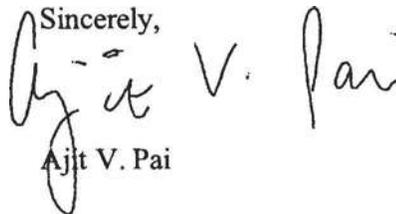
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Marc Veasey  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1519 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Veasey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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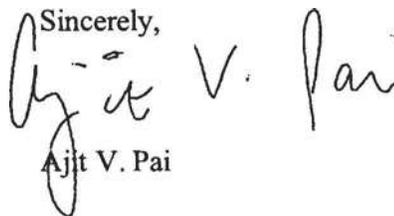
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Mike Doyle  
Chairman  
Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Subcommittee on Communications and Technology  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Doyle:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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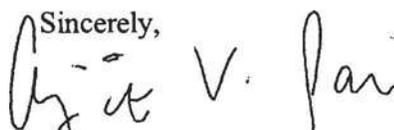
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Peter Welch  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2303 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Welch:

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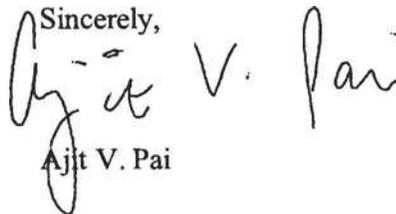
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Tom O'Halleran  
U.S. House of Representatives  
126 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman O'Halleran:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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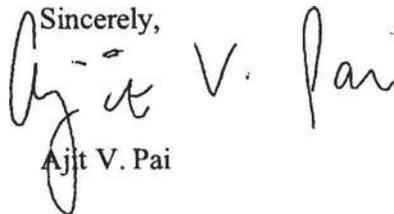
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Regarding the Lifeline minimum service standards proceeding, the Commission is faced with wildly divergent requests. Some argue for the status quo, demanding that Lifeline subscribers be consigned to just 3 GB of data per month, despite the increased data usage we've all seen during the pandemic. Others argue for an increase to unlimited data. The formula adopted by the prior Administration would increase the minimum to 11.75 GB. In my view, Lifeline subscribers shouldn't receive second-class service, so the status quo is unacceptable. At the same time, a dramatic increase in the standard is likely to disrupt the market, to the detriment of subscribers. As such, I have proposed a modest increase to 4.5 GB, in line with the increases the Commission has successfully overseen over the last few years. Notably, many Lifeline resellers offered (and the majority of Lifeline subscribers had access to) even more data than this in the early months of the pandemic.

To be clear, I agree that more can be done. But with the tax that funds our universal service programs at an all-time high, major new funding initiatives must come from Congress. That's why I have repeatedly called on Congress to establish a Remote Learning Initiative and ensure that every student in this country can access online learning resources as schools are reopening. And that's why I have requested Congress to fund new connectivity programs for individuals and families experiencing economic hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Broadband Connectivity and Digital Equity Framework proposed by Chairman Roger Wicker of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the U.S. Senate and Ranking Member Greg Walden of the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the U.S. House of Representatives is a forward-thinking proposal to do just that. I urge members to find common ground on broadband funding and other core national priorities and avoid tangential issues that have been stalling progress. We stand ready to work with Congress in this area should there be interest in practical solutions to the communications-related challenges posed by the pandemic.

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

Sincerely,  
  
Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Tony Cárdenas  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2438 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Cárdenas:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

Under my leadership, the Commission has taken aggressive action to help ensure that consumers stay connected during this crisis. I called on broadband and telephone service providers to keep Americans connected, and hundreds of providers signed the Keep Americans Connected Pledge and went above and beyond for low-income American families. For example, Starry, Comcast, Cox, Verizon, and Ducor Telephone Co. offered free service to new or existing low-income customers, and Charter offered free service for new subscribing families that included students. Lifeline providers, in turn, were able to go above and beyond the 3 GB minimum service standard, with T-Mobile, TracFone, Q Link, and Claro each offering an additional 5 GB of data per month for Lifeline subscribers, Smith Bagley offering an additional 10 GB of data for subscribers in Tribal areas, and Sprint offering one-time deposits of 20 GB into subscribers' accounts. What is more, Sprint, T-Mobile, TracFone, and Q Link offered Lifeline subscribers unlimited voice minutes and texting.

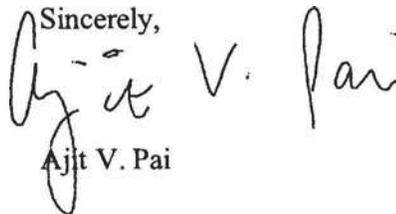
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

September 3, 2020

The Honorable Yvette D. Clarke  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2058 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Clarke:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Federal Communications Commission's efforts to help low-income Americans stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever, it is critical that American consumers maintain connectivity so that they can stay in touch with loved ones, telework, participate in telehealth and remote learning, and maintain the social distancing necessary to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

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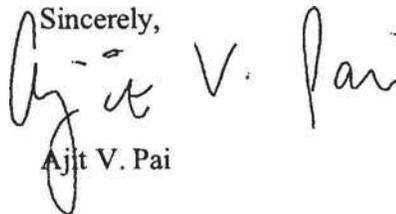
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