



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

In response to this sudden shift, the Commission quickly worked to facilitate the transition to online learning by waiving and extending several E-Rate 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 under our rules. 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 included a 35-day extension of the initial application filing window for funding year 2020 and 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 that are closed due to COVID-19 may permit the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property.

Most recently, we opened a second funding year 2020 filing window to allow schools to request additional E-Rate funding specifically to address increased on-campus bandwidth needs resulting from the pandemic. Schools are increasingly shifting to 1:1 student-to-device ratios in classrooms, relying on live streaming of classroom instruction to students at home, and expanding use of cloud-based educational tools and platforms—all of which can significantly increase on-campus bandwidth requirements. The second filing window will close on October 16, 2020.

I also would point out that Congress has also provided \$16 billion in CARES Act funding—a massive injection of funding that is 400% more than the annual cap for the E-Rate program—to help schools during COVID-19. Congress also made it explicit that this funding can be used for remote learning. We've been working with the Department of Education to help make sure that schools know about this important resource, and I would hope and expect that educators would prioritize their students' needs as they spend these funds. Many have already

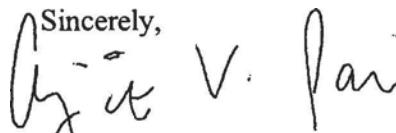
done so, including officials in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia who are deploying CARES Act funding for the benefit of students. We've also been working with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to get the word out to libraries and Tribal organizations about CARES Act funding that is available to help bridge the digital divide in their communities.

And just this week, the Federal Communications Commission enabled hundreds of rural broadband providers to offer discounts and service upgrades to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Specifically, the National Exchange Carrier Association worked with the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau staff on tariff revisions that will provide eligible new customers of rural carriers a 25% discount on certain broadband services and offer existing eligible customers faster connections at no cost, all with the goal of helping connect low-income students to remote learning.

While these efforts are providing much needed support for remote learning, the Commission is limited in its ability to take the further action you request. The Commission must act within the bounds of the statutory authority given to the agency by Congress and use E-Rate program funding for broadband and other "services" provided to school "classrooms." As such, wireless connectivity and devices supplied to students at home unfortunately do not qualify for E-Rate support under the law, regardless of whether they are being used for educational purposes. And because agencies only have the authority granted to them by Congress, we do not have the authority to waive these statutory requirements. *See City of Arlington, Tex. v. FCC*, 569 U.S. 290, 297 (2013); *Chrysler Corp. v. Brown*, 441 U.S. 281, 302 (1979).

That's why we have been working, and will continue to work, with Congress on dedicated funding for remote learning to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and online educational resources from home. This includes funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi enabled modems, end-user devices, and broadband connectivity for students who need these tools to do online learning at home. I remain willing to work with Congress on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed back in the first month of the pandemic.

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

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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October 1, 2020

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

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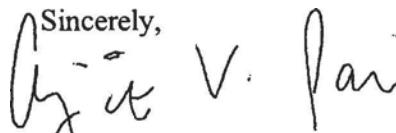
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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October 1, 2020

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

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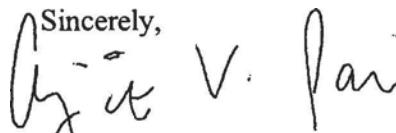
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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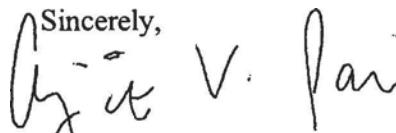
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
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October 1, 2020

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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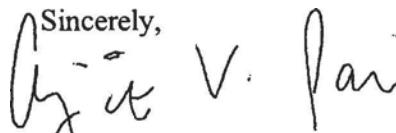
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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October 1, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cardin:

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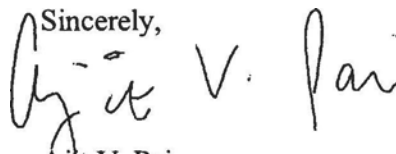
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OFFICE OF
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October 1, 2020

The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

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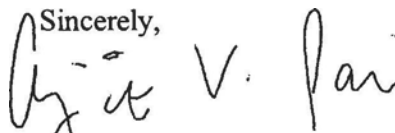
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The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

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In response to this sudden shift, the Commission quickly worked to facilitate the transition to online learning by waiving and extending several E-Rate 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 under our rules. 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 included a 35-day extension of the initial application filing window for funding year 2020 and 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 that are closed due to COVID-19 may permit the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property.

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I also would point out that Congress has also provided \$16 billion in CARES Act funding—a massive injection of funding that is 400% more than the annual cap for the E-Rate program—to help schools during COVID-19. Congress also made it explicit that this funding can be used for remote learning. We've been working with the Department of Education to help make sure that schools know about this important resource, and I would hope and expect that educators would prioritize their students' needs as they spend these funds. Many have already

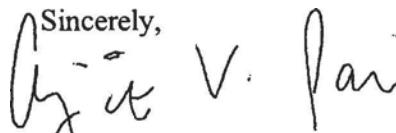
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That's why we have been working, and will continue to work, with Congress on dedicated funding for remote learning to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and online educational resources from home. This includes funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi enabled modems, end-user devices, and broadband connectivity for students who need these tools to do online learning at home. I remain willing to work with Congress on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed back in the first month of 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

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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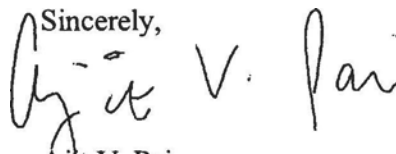
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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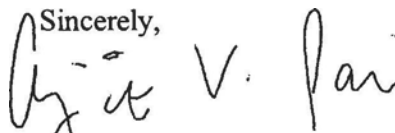
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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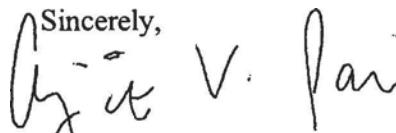
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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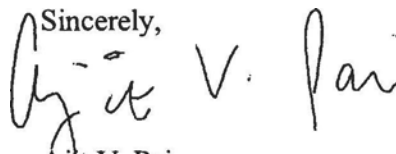
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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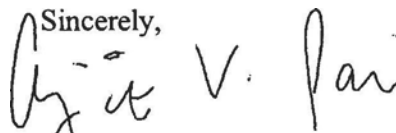
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hirono:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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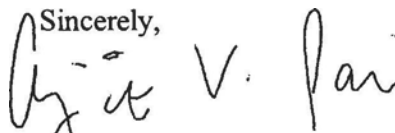
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kaine:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

In response to this sudden shift, the Commission quickly worked to facilitate the transition to online learning by waiving and extending several E-Rate 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 under our rules. 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 included a 35-day extension of the initial application filing window for funding year 2020 and 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 that are closed due to COVID-19 may permit the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property.

Most recently, we opened a second funding year 2020 filing window to allow schools to request additional E-Rate funding specifically to address increased on-campus bandwidth needs resulting from the pandemic. Schools are increasingly shifting to 1:1 student-to-device ratios in classrooms, relying on live streaming of classroom instruction to students at home, and expanding use of cloud-based educational tools and platforms—all of which can significantly increase on-campus bandwidth requirements. The second filing window will close on October 16, 2020.

I also would point out that Congress has also provided \$16 billion in CARES Act funding—a massive injection of funding that is 400% more than the annual cap for the E-Rate program—to help schools during COVID-19. Congress also made it explicit that this funding can be used for remote learning. We've been working with the Department of Education to help make sure that schools know about this important resource, and I would hope and expect that educators would prioritize their students' needs as they spend these funds. Many have already

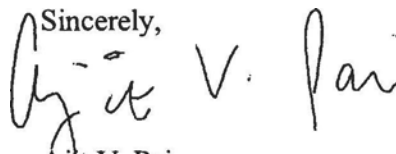
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And just this week, the Federal Communications Commission enabled hundreds of rural broadband providers to offer discounts and service upgrades to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Specifically, the National Exchange Carrier Association worked with the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau staff on tariff revisions that will provide eligible new customers of rural carriers a 25% discount on certain broadband services and offer existing eligible customers faster connections at no cost, all with the goal of helping connect low-income students to remote learning.

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That's why we have been working, and will continue to work, with Congress on dedicated funding for remote learning to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and online educational resources from home. This includes funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi enabled modems, end-user devices, and broadband connectivity for students who need these tools to do online learning at home. I remain willing to work with Congress on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed back in the first month of 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

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator King:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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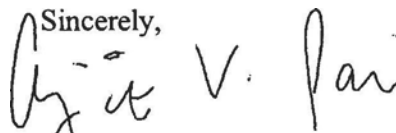
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 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 Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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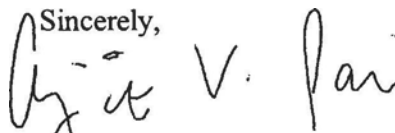
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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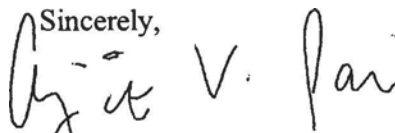
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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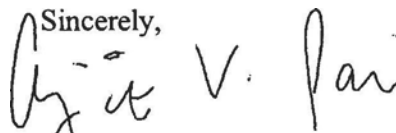
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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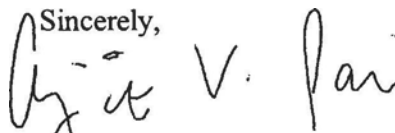
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

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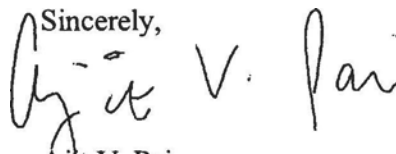
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OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

In response to this sudden shift, the Commission quickly worked to facilitate the transition to online learning by waiving and extending several E-Rate 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 under our rules. 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 included a 35-day extension of the initial application filing window for funding year 2020 and 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 that are closed due to COVID-19 may permit the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property.

Most recently, we opened a second funding year 2020 filing window to allow schools to request additional E-Rate funding specifically to address increased on-campus bandwidth needs resulting from the pandemic. Schools are increasingly shifting to 1:1 student-to-device ratios in classrooms, relying on live streaming of classroom instruction to students at home, and expanding use of cloud-based educational tools and platforms—all of which can significantly increase on-campus bandwidth requirements. The second filing window will close on October 16, 2020.

I also would point out that Congress has also provided \$16 billion in CARES Act funding—a massive injection of funding that is 400% more than the annual cap for the E-Rate program—to help schools during COVID-19. Congress also made it explicit that this funding can be used for remote learning. We've been working with the Department of Education to help make sure that schools know about this important resource, and I would hope and expect that educators would prioritize their students' needs as they spend these funds. Many have already

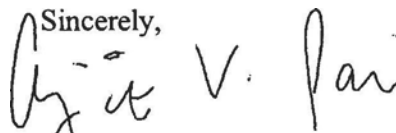
done so, including officials in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia who are deploying CARES Act funding for the benefit of students. We've also been working with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to get the word out to libraries and Tribal organizations about CARES Act funding that is available to help bridge the digital divide in their communities.

And just this week, the Federal Communications Commission enabled hundreds of rural broadband providers to offer discounts and service upgrades to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Specifically, the National Exchange Carrier Association worked with the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau staff on tariff revisions that will provide eligible new customers of rural carriers a 25% discount on certain broadband services and offer existing eligible customers faster connections at no cost, all with the goal of helping connect low-income students to remote learning.

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That's why we have been working, and will continue to work, with Congress on dedicated funding for remote learning to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and online educational resources from home. This includes funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi enabled modems, end-user devices, and broadband connectivity for students who need these tools to do online learning at home. I remain willing to work with Congress on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed back in the first month of 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

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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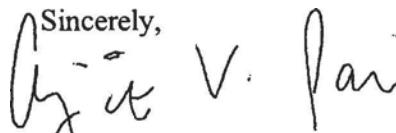
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

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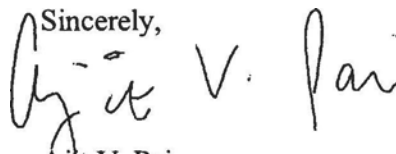
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 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 Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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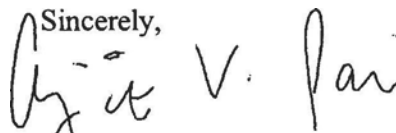
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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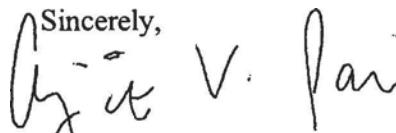
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rosen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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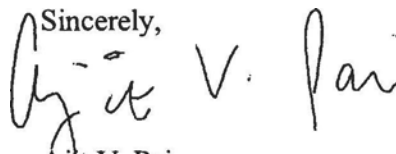
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OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

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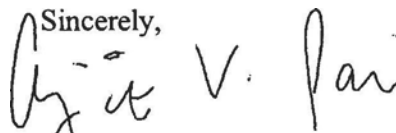
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Brian Schatz
United States Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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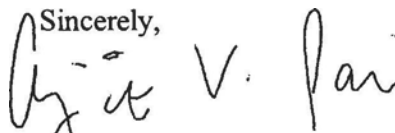
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Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

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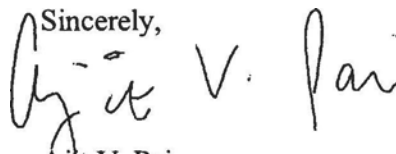
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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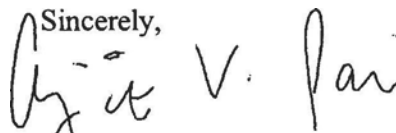
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Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tina Smith
United States Senate
720 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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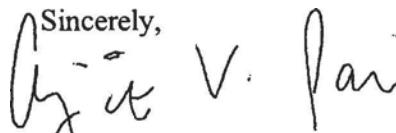
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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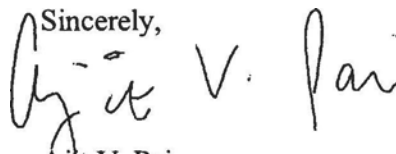
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

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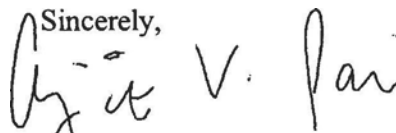
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

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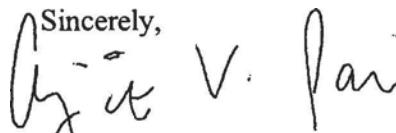
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
United States Senate
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Warren:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

In response to this sudden shift, the Commission quickly worked to facilitate the transition to online learning by waiving and extending several E-Rate 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 under our rules. 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 included a 35-day extension of the initial application filing window for funding year 2020 and 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 that are closed due to COVID-19 may permit the general public to use E-Rate-supported Wi-Fi networks while on the school's campus or library property.

Most recently, we opened a second funding year 2020 filing window to allow schools to request additional E-Rate funding specifically to address increased on-campus bandwidth needs resulting from the pandemic. Schools are increasingly shifting to 1:1 student-to-device ratios in classrooms, relying on live streaming of classroom instruction to students at home, and expanding use of cloud-based educational tools and platforms—all of which can significantly increase on-campus bandwidth requirements. The second filing window will close on October 16, 2020.

I also would point out that Congress has also provided \$16 billion in CARES Act funding—a massive injection of funding that is 400% more than the annual cap for the E-Rate program—to help schools during COVID-19. Congress also made it explicit that this funding can be used for remote learning. We've been working with the Department of Education to help make sure that schools know about this important resource, and I would hope and expect that educators would prioritize their students' needs as they spend these funds. Many have already

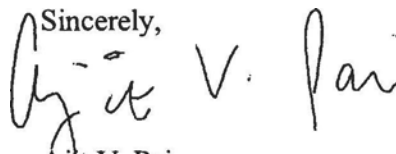
done so, including officials in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia who are deploying CARES Act funding for the benefit of students. We've also been working with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to get the word out to libraries and Tribal organizations about CARES Act funding that is available to help bridge the digital divide in their communities.

And just this week, the Federal Communications Commission enabled hundreds of rural broadband providers to offer discounts and service upgrades to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Specifically, the National Exchange Carrier Association worked with the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau staff on tariff revisions that will provide eligible new customers of rural carriers a 25% discount on certain broadband services and offer existing eligible customers faster connections at no cost, all with the goal of helping connect low-income students to remote learning.

While these efforts are providing much needed support for remote learning, the Commission is limited in its ability to take the further action you request. The Commission must act within the bounds of the statutory authority given to the agency by Congress and use E-Rate program funding for broadband and other "services" provided to school "classrooms." As such, wireless connectivity and devices supplied to students at home unfortunately do not qualify for E-Rate support under the law, regardless of whether they are being used for educational purposes. And because agencies only have the authority granted to them by Congress, we do not have the authority to waive these statutory requirements. *See City of Arlington, Tex. v. FCC*, 569 U.S. 290, 297 (2013); *Chrysler Corp. v. Brown*, 441 U.S. 281, 302 (1979).

That's why we have been working, and will continue to work, with Congress on dedicated funding for remote learning to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and online educational resources from home. This includes funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi enabled modems, end-user devices, and broadband connectivity for students who need these tools to do online learning at home. I remain willing to work with Congress on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed back in the first month of 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

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
United States Senate
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Leahy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cardin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Kamala D. Harris
United States Senate
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Harris:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murphy:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Bob Casey
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Cory Booker
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Booker:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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October 1, 2020

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393 Russell Senate Office Building
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 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 Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hirono:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator King:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Robert Menendez
United States Senate
528 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Menendez:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
United States Senate
731 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Stabenow:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jacky Rosen
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Rosen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jack Reed
United States Senate
728 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reed:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
United States Senate
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Merkley:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tim Kaine
United States Senate
231 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Kaine:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senate
506 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Shaheen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
United States Senate
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sanders:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Richard J. Durbin
United States Senate
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Durbin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 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 Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Duckworth:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Brian Schatz
United States Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Schatz:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Whitehouse:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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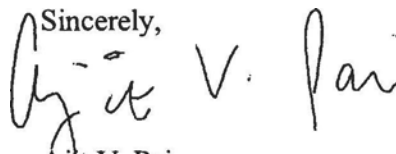
done so, including officials in Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Oklahoma, and the District of Columbia who are deploying CARES Act funding for the benefit of students. We've also been working with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to get the word out to libraries and Tribal organizations about CARES Act funding that is available to help bridge the digital divide in their communities.

And just this week, the Federal Communications Commission enabled hundreds of rural broadband providers to offer discounts and service upgrades to families with children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunches through the National School Lunch Program. Specifically, the National Exchange Carrier Association worked with the FCC's Wireline Competition Bureau staff on tariff revisions that will provide eligible new customers of rural carriers a 25% discount on certain broadband services and offer existing eligible customers faster connections at no cost, all with the goal of helping connect low-income students to remote learning.

While these efforts are providing much needed support for remote learning, the Commission is limited in its ability to take the further action you request. The Commission must act within the bounds of the statutory authority given to the agency by Congress and use E-Rate program funding for broadband and other "services" provided to school "classrooms." As such, wireless connectivity and devices supplied to students at home unfortunately do not qualify for E-Rate support under the law, regardless of whether they are being used for educational purposes. And because agencies only have the authority granted to them by Congress, we do not have the authority to waive these statutory requirements. *See City of Arlington, Tex. v. FCC*, 569 U.S. 290, 297 (2013); *Chrysler Corp. v. Brown*, 441 U.S. 281, 302 (1979).

That's why we have been working, and will continue to work, with Congress on dedicated funding for remote learning to give students across this country an opportunity to connect with their teachers and online educational resources from home. This includes funding for Wi-Fi hotspots, Wi-Fi enabled modems, end-user devices, and broadband connectivity for students who need these tools to do online learning at home. I remain willing to work with Congress on solutions to this problem, especially a remote learning initiative of the kind I proposed back in the first month of the pandemic.

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

Sincerely,

Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

October 1, 2020

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Commission's efforts to help students stay connected while they shift to online learning 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.

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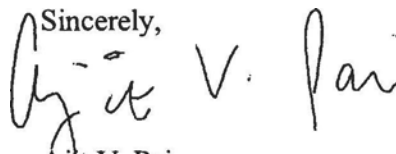
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