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For Immediate Release

**FCC PROPOSES CREATION OF SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES
CYBERSECURITY PILOT PROGRAM**

*Proceeding Will Explore How Universal Service Fund Support Could Help Protect
Schools and Libraries From Cyber Threats*

WASHINGTON, November 13, 2023—The Federal Communications Commission today proposed the creation of a Schools and Libraries Cybersecurity Pilot Program that would allow the Commission to obtain valuable data concerning the cybersecurity and advanced firewall services that would best help K-12 schools and libraries address the growing cyber threats and attacks against their broadband networks. The effort is part of Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel’s Learn Without Limits initiative to ensure connectivity in schools and libraries so everyone, everywhere has access to high-speed Internet services.

“This pilot program is an important pathway for hardening our defenses against sophisticated cyberattacks on schools and ransomware attacks that harm our students and get in the way of their learning,” **said Chairwoman Rosenworcel**. “Protecting our students is a critically important task and one that touches on the mission of several federal agencies. Ultimately, we want to learn from this effort, identify how to get the balance right, and provide our federal, state, and local government partners with actionable data about the most effective and coordinated way to address this growing problem.”

To address the Homework Gap, the FCC under Chairwoman Rosenworcel launched the Learn Without Limits initiative to expand connectivity for online learning and help put an end to the Homework Gap so that all students get the broadband support they need to do homework and communicate with teachers. Building off the agency’s successful investment in school and library connectivity through its Universal Service Fund-supported E-Rate program, the Commission is looking to modernize the program to meet today’s needs, including its recent decision to support Wi-Fi on school buses, changes to ensure libraries in Tribal communities can better access E-Rate support, and [last week’s announcement](#) that proposed allowing schools and libraries to apply for funding from the FCC’s E-Rate program for the off-premises use of Wi-Fi hotspots and wireless internet access services.

The proposed pilot program, which calls for an investment of up to \$200 million over three years, would be established within the Universal Service Fund (USF), but separate from the Commission’s E-Rate program, to ensure gains in enhanced cybersecurity don’t come at a cost of undermining E-Rate’s success in connecting schools and libraries, and promoting digital equity. The pilot program would seek to learn more about which cybersecurity and advanced firewall services will have the greatest impact in helping K-12 schools and libraries protect their broadband networks and data, while also ensuring that limited USF funds are being utilized in the most effective manner. In addition, the pilot program would provide funding to eligible K-12 schools and libraries to defray the qualifying costs of receiving the cybersecurity

and advanced firewall services needed to protect their E-Rate-funded broadband networks and data from the growing number of school and library-focused cyber events.

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).