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**For Immediate Release**

**COMMISSIONER GOMEZ AND CONGRESSMAN DARREN SOTO  
ADVOCATE FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE AFFORDABLE  
CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, March 27, 2024 —

Yesterday, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Commissioner Anna M. Gomez and Congressman Darren Soto (FL-09), member of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, hosted a roundtable at the Orlando Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) with Veterans Affairs (VA) social workers and community stakeholders to discuss the positive impact of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) on Veterans and their families.

The roundtable took place in Orlando, Florida. Roundtable participants included the Deputy Director of the Orlando VAMC and other leadership from the Director's Office, the Director of Public Policy for Heart of Florida United Way, the Director of Mission United for Heart of Florida United Way, and representatives from the Orange County Veterans Services.

"The Affordable Connectivity Program is about making sure everyone, everywhere in this country has access to Internet service that connects them to economic and educational opportunity as well as healthcare services, for example connecting Veterans with VA appointments and follow-up medical visits," **said Commissioner Gomez**. "I am here because I want to see this program refunded, and I stand ready to assist Congress with any efforts to fully fund the ACP into the future."

"The Affordable Connectivity Program plays a key role in Central Florida, particularly for Veterans, as it closes the digital divide and ensures access to vital services. With over 1.7 million participants statewide, including 28% of households in Florida's 9th congressional district, it's clear how impactful this program is," **said Congressman Darren Soto**. "The ACP is set to expire in April unless additional funding is secured. That's why I'm proud to co-sponsor the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act, seeking \$7 billion to extend its duration. Ensuring the protection of this program is essential, as it serves as a cornerstone in providing crucial support to veterans in Central Florida."

Florida ranks fourth in the nation for ACP enrollees, with 1,707,857 participants. In Florida's 9th district, 28% of households are enrolled. The Veteran community in Central Florida benefits significantly from the program, which enhances access to crucial services, including telehealth. Between October 2023 and March 2024, telehealth visits accounted for 36% of Orlando VAMC's appointments. Given the high demand for medical care among Veterans in Central Florida, improving connectivity and telehealth access is essential for former service members to receive necessary care.

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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).*