



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

May 30, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chair
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Due to the expiration of existing funding from Congress, ACP benefits have ceased. Additional funding from Congress remains the only near-term solution to keep this vital program up and running.

It is regrettable that the Federal Communications Commission must bring to a close the most successful broadband affordability program in our Nation's history. There continues to be a tremendous need for the ACP and the consistent, reliable benefit it offers to help low-income households in rural, suburban, and urban America get online and stay online. As my May 1, 2024 letter explained, for the more than 23 million households that count on the ACP, the end of the program means increased bills and increased disconnection. In fact, 77 percent of ACP households in a Commission survey stated that losing the benefit would disrupt their service by making them change their plans or lead to them dropping internet service entirely.

Many of these households have written the Commission to let them know how much this program means to them. A consistent theme is that many ACP recipients are seniors on fixed incomes struggling to pay competing bills and make ends meet. Nearly half of ACP households are led by someone over the age of 50. As my April 2, 2024 letter explained, a Commission survey revealed that nearly 75 percent of households in this age group rely on their ACP-supported internet service to access healthcare. Nearly three-quarters of these households also indicated that a \$30 monthly increase in their broadband bills would force them to make changes to the broadband service they receive with the ACP's help, including canceling it completely.

The end of the ACP could also leave many military families on the wrong side of the digital divide. My April 2, 2024 letter explained that according to one estimate, more than four million households with an active duty or former military member are enrolled in the ACP.¹ For

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many veteran households, the loss of the ACP benefit could result in service disruptions that would impact access to critical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs including telemedicine, job training, employment, and VA benefits.

In addition, millions of ACP households with school-aged children could experience educational setbacks as a result of the end of the ACP. As my April 2, 2024 letter noted, approximately 3.4 million households seeking to enroll in the ACP indicated participation in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs as one of the ways they qualify for the ACP. For households with school-aged children, the loss of service that may result from the end of the ACP could easily worsen the Homework Gap during the school year, and impede access to summer enrichment programs.

The end of ACP will also impact approximately 3.4 million rural households and over 300,000 households in Tribal areas. The ACP is particularly important for these areas because they generally experience higher broadband costs, lower subscription rates, and higher poverty levels than the rest of the country. Further, in many of these areas the closest medical specialist, job training program, or local university extension office may be hours away. An ACP supported high-speed internet connection allowed households in these areas to take advantage of online classes and telemedicine visits and also save travel time and related expenses.

The Commission has taken steps to help these ACP households transition during this critical time. First, since starting the ACP wind-down, the Commission has encouraged providers to develop low-income programs and help ACP households transition to these programs, and has also strongly encouraged providers to include information about their low-income programs and lower-priced services, and contact information for learning about these options, in their required notices informing ACP households about the end of the program.² Second, the Commission has provided resources and offered training regarding the Commission's Lifeline program (which provides a \$9.25 monthly benefit on broadband service) to public utilities commissions in each state and territory,³ as well as hundreds of our ACP outreach partners and grantees.⁴ Third, the Commission has reminded Lifeline providers of the requirement to publicize the Lifeline program.⁵ Although the Lifeline benefit may alleviate some financial pressure for certain ACP households, it is not a replacement for the ACP. To be

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clear, not all ACP households will qualify for Lifeline. Moreover by statute, many ACP providers are not eligible to participate in the Lifeline program.

The ACP filled an important gap that provider low-income programs, state and local affordability programs, and the Lifeline program cannot fully address. Millions of ACP households nationwide, and households that may be eligible but have not yet enrolled, are looking to Congress to provide the funding needed to keep the ACP up and running. The Commission is available to provide any assistance Congress may need to support funding the ACP in the future and stands ready to resume the program if additional funding is provided.

Sincerely,

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Jessica Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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May 30, 2024

The Honorable Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
512 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Cruz:

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Due to the expiration of existing funding from Congress, ACP benefits have ceased. Additional funding from Congress remains the only near-term solution to keep this vital program up and running.

It is regrettable that the Federal Communications Commission must bring to a close the most successful broadband affordability program in our Nation's history. There continues to be a tremendous need for the ACP and the consistent, reliable benefit it offers to help low-income households in rural, suburban, and urban America get online and stay online. As my May 1, 2024 letter explained, for the more than 23 million households that count on the ACP, the end of the program means increased bills and increased disconnection. In fact, 77 percent of ACP households in a Commission survey stated that losing the benefit would disrupt their service by making them change their plans or lead to them dropping internet service entirely.

Many of these households have written the Commission to let them know how much this program means to them. A consistent theme is that many ACP recipients are seniors on fixed incomes struggling to pay competing bills and make ends meet. Nearly half of ACP households are led by someone over the age of 50. As my April 2, 2024 letter explained, a Commission survey revealed that nearly 75 percent of households in this age group rely on their ACP-supported internet service to access healthcare. Nearly three-quarters of these households also indicated that a \$30 monthly increase in their broadband bills would force them to make changes to the broadband service they receive with the ACP's help, including canceling it completely.

The end of the ACP could also leave many military families on the wrong side of the digital divide. My April 2, 2024 letter explained that according to one estimate, more than four million households with an active duty or former military member are enrolled in the ACP.¹ For many veteran households, the loss of the ACP benefit could result in service disruptions that

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May 30, 2024

The Honorable Bill Hagerty
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ranking Member Hagerty:

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Due to the expiration of existing funding from Congress, ACP benefits have ceased. Additional funding from Congress remains the only near-term solution to keep this vital program up and running.

It is regrettable that the Federal Communications Commission must bring to a close the most successful broadband affordability program in our Nation's history. There continues to be a tremendous need for the ACP and the consistent, reliable benefit it offers to help low-income households in rural, suburban, and urban America get online and stay online. As my May 1, 2024 letter explained, for the more than 23 million households that count on the ACP, the end of the program means increased bills and increased disconnection. In fact, 77 percent of ACP households in a Commission survey stated that losing the benefit would disrupt their service by making them change their plans or lead to them dropping internet service entirely.

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May 30, 2024

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
U.S. House of Representatives
1036 Longworth Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Hoyer:

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It is regrettable that the Federal Communications Commission must bring to a close the most successful broadband affordability program in our Nation's history. There continues to be a tremendous need for the ACP and the consistent, reliable benefit it offers to help low-income households in rural, suburban, and urban America get online and stay online. As my May 1, 2024 letter explained, for the more than 23 million households that count on the ACP, the end of the program means increased bills and increased disconnection. In fact, 77 percent of ACP households in a Commission survey stated that losing the benefit would disrupt their service by making them change their plans or lead to them dropping internet service entirely.

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May 30, 2024

The Honorable David Joyce
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
U.S. House of Representatives
2000 Rayburn House Office Building (G Floor)
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Joyce:

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May 30, 2024

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Ranking Member Pallone:

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Due to the expiration of existing funding from Congress, ACP benefits have ceased. Additional funding from Congress remains the only near-term solution to keep this vital program up and running.

It is regrettable that the Federal Communications Commission must bring to a close the most successful broadband affordability program in our Nation's history. There continues to be a tremendous need for the ACP and the consistent, reliable benefit it offers to help low-income households in rural, suburban, and urban America get online and stay online. As my May 1, 2024 letter explained, for the more than 23 million households that count on the ACP, the end of the program means increased bills and increased disconnection. In fact, 77 percent of ACP households in a Commission survey stated that losing the benefit would disrupt their service by making them change their plans or lead to them dropping internet service entirely.

Many of these households have written the Commission to let them know how much this program means to them. A consistent theme is that many ACP recipients are seniors on fixed incomes struggling to pay competing bills and make ends meet. Nearly half of ACP households are led by someone over the age of 50. As my April 2, 2024 letter explained, a Commission survey revealed that nearly 75 percent of households in this age group rely on their ACP-supported internet service to access healthcare. Nearly three-quarters of these households also indicated that a \$30 monthly increase in their broadband bills would force them to make changes to the broadband service they receive with the ACP's help, including canceling it completely.

The end of the ACP could also leave many military families on the wrong side of the digital divide. My April 2, 2024 letter explained that according to one estimate, more than four million households with an active duty or former military member are enrolled in the ACP.¹ For

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many veteran households, the loss of the ACP benefit could result in service disruptions that would impact access to critical services from the Department of Veterans Affairs including telemedicine, job training, employment, and VA benefits.

In addition, millions of ACP households with school-aged children could experience educational setbacks as a result of the end of the ACP. As my April 2, 2024 letter noted, approximately 3.4 million households seeking to enroll in the ACP indicated participation in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs as one of the ways they qualify for the ACP. For households with school-aged children, the loss of service that may result from the end of the ACP could easily worsen the Homework Gap during the school year, and impede access to summer enrichment programs.

The end of ACP will also impact approximately 3.4 million rural households and over 300,000 households in Tribal areas. The ACP is particularly important for these areas because they generally experience higher broadband costs, lower subscription rates, and higher poverty levels than the rest of the country. Further, in many of these areas the closest medical specialist, job training program, or local university extension office may be hours away. An ACP supported high-speed internet connection allowed households in these areas to take advantage of online classes and telemedicine visits and also save travel time and related expenses.

The Commission has taken steps to help these ACP households transition during this critical time. First, since starting the ACP wind-down, the Commission has encouraged providers to develop low-income programs and help ACP households transition to these programs, and has also strongly encouraged providers to include information about their low-income programs and lower-priced services, and contact information for learning about these options, in their required notices informing ACP households about the end of the program.² Second, the Commission has provided resources and offered training regarding the Commission's Lifeline program (which provides a \$9.25 monthly benefit on broadband service) to public utilities commissions in each state and territory,³ as well as hundreds of our ACP outreach partners and grantees.⁴ Third, the Commission has reminded Lifeline providers of the requirement to publicize the Lifeline program.⁵ Although the Lifeline benefit may alleviate some financial pressure for certain ACP households, it is not a replacement for the ACP. To be

² See, e.g., *Affordable Connectivity Program*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Order, DA 24-23, at 6, 8, paras. 12, 20 (WCB Jan. 2024), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-24-23A1.pdf>; *Wireline Competition Bureau Announces Final Month of the ACP Benefit*, WC Docket No. 21-450, Public Notice, DA 24-195, at 3 (WCB Mar. 2024), <https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DA-24-195A1.pdf>.

³ Letter from Trent B. Harkrader, Chief, Federal Communications Commission, Wireline Competition Bureau, to Public Utility Commissioners (May 23, 2024), <https://www.fcc.gov/sites/default/files/ACP-Letter-Bureau-State-PUC-052024.pdf>.

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clear, not all ACP households will qualify for Lifeline. Moreover by statute, many ACP providers are not eligible to participate in the Lifeline program.

The ACP filled an important gap that provider low-income programs, state and local affordability programs, and the Lifeline program cannot fully address. Millions of ACP households nationwide, and households that may be eligible but have not yet enrolled, are looking to Congress to provide the funding needed to keep the ACP up and running. The Commission is available to provide any assistance Congress may need to support funding the ACP in the future and stands ready to resume the program if additional funding is provided.

Sincerely,

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Jessica Rosenworcel



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

May 30, 2024

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Madam Chair:

I am writing to provide you with an update regarding the end of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Due to the expiration of existing funding from Congress, ACP benefits have ceased. Additional funding from Congress remains the only near-term solution to keep this vital program up and running.

It is regrettable that the Federal Communications Commission must bring to a close the most successful broadband affordability program in our Nation's history. There continues to be a tremendous need for the ACP and the consistent, reliable benefit it offers to help low-income households in rural, suburban, and urban America get online and stay online. As my May 1, 2024 letter explained, for the more than 23 million households that count on the ACP, the end of the program means increased bills and increased disconnection. In fact, 77 percent of ACP households in a Commission survey stated that losing the benefit would disrupt their service by making them change their plans or lead to them dropping internet service entirely.

Many of these households have written the Commission to let them know how much this program means to them. A consistent theme is that many ACP recipients are seniors on fixed incomes struggling to pay competing bills and make ends meet. Nearly half of ACP households are led by someone over the age of 50. As my April 2, 2024 letter explained, a Commission survey revealed that nearly 75 percent of households in this age group rely on their ACP-supported internet service to access healthcare. Nearly three-quarters of these households also indicated that a \$30 monthly increase in their broadband bills would force them to make changes to the broadband service they receive with the ACP's help, including canceling it completely.

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
CHAIRWOMAN

May 30, 2024

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government
United States Senate
S-128 The Capital Building
Washington, DC 20510

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