



May 10, 2023

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AAJC

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Maya Wiley

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Financial  
Services and General Government  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chair  
House Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Steve Womack  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Financial Services  
and General Government  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray, Chair Van Hollen, Chair Granger, and Chair Womack,

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than 230 national organizations to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States, and the 165 undersigned civil society organizations, municipal governments, and other interested groups, we write to request robust additional funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

Today, the ACP's current rate of expenditure is roughly \$500 million per month. Based on this and projected growth, funding for the ACP could be exhausted by Q2 of next year, if not sooner.<sup>1</sup> Without adequate and sustained funding, millions of vulnerable Americans currently relying on the program would see their internet bill jump or be disconnected entirely, and Congress' bipartisan \$42 billion investment in broadband deployment will not meet the goal of universal broadband deployment and adoption.

Broadband access at home is universally recognized as a necessity. It is the essential infrastructure of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the signers of this letter are committed to ensuring that all communities, particularly those who are underserved, gain and continue to have access to affordable, reliable, and high-quality advanced communications services. Lack of high-speed internet access among low-income people, communities of color, and other underserved

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<sup>1</sup> "ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker," Universal Service Administrative Company (last accessed Apr. 14, 2023), <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/#total-enrolled>.

communities is of particular concern, and the ACP has proven critical in getting households in these communities online.

The last three years demonstrate that broadband internet service is indispensable for employment, education, health care, commerce, community building, civic engagement, and government services. The high cost of service, however, prevents access for countless households across the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to Congress' action, the ACP now helps more than 17 million households in America afford broadband internet, with enrollment continuing to increase steadily.<sup>3</sup> These households collectively save more than \$500 million per month on internet expenses,<sup>4</sup> while the program drives economic growth, higher incomes, and lower unemployment.<sup>5</sup> The ACP is currently improving telehealth access for more than 3 million low-income seniors and 400,000 veterans, expanding access to education for more than 3 million students, and providing more economic opportunities to more than 1 million federal housing residents.<sup>6</sup> Broadband strengthens communities by creating immediate and long-lasting economic benefits and provides economic improvements for everyone — from rural areas that then become more attractive to businesses and workers, to cities facing aging and inadequate broadband infrastructure. For example, one study demonstrated the employment effects of subsidized broadband resulted in just over \$2,200 of benefits per household through increased labor force participation.<sup>7</sup>

Failure to extend the ACP with new funding could result in the biggest loss of internet connectivity ever. Without action from Congress this year, millions of households could immediately lose service.<sup>8</sup> In addition, the loss of ACP would reduce the efficacy of Congress' groundbreaking \$42 billion investment in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. A recent study concluded that the

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<sup>2</sup> Anna Read, "How Can the United States Address Broadband Affordability," Pew (Apr. 29, 2022), <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2022/04/29/how-can-the-united-states-address-broadband-affordability>; Dr. Hernan Galperin, Annual Survey on Broadband Adoption 2021, California Emerging Technology Fund and University of Southern California (Mar. 2021), [https://www.cetfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Annual\\_Survey\\_2021\\_CETF\\_USC\\_Final\\_Summary\\_Report\\_CETF\\_A.pdf](https://www.cetfund.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Annual_Survey_2021_CETF_USC_Final_Summary_Report_CETF_A.pdf); "No Home Left Offline: Bridging the Broadband Affordability Gap," Education SuperHighway (2022), [https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/wp-content/uploads/No-Home-Left-Offline-Report\\_EducationSuperHighway2021.pdf](https://www.educationsuperhighway.org/wp-content/uploads/No-Home-Left-Offline-Report_EducationSuperHighway2021.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> "ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker," Universal Service Administrative Company (last accessed Apr. 14, 2023), <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/#total-enrolled>.

<sup>4</sup> "Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions to Lower High-Speed Internet Costs," The White House (Mar. 15, 2023), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/03/15/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-new-actions-to-lower-high-speed-internet-costs/>.

<sup>5</sup> Adie Tomer, Lara Fishbane, Angela Siefer, and Bill Callahan, "Digital Prosperity: How Broadband Can Deliver Health and Equity to All Communities," Brookings (Feb 27, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/digital-prosperity-how-broadband-can-deliver-health-and-equity-to-all-communities/>.

<sup>6</sup> "ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker," Universal Service Administrative Company (last accessed Apr. 14, 2023), <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/#total-enrolled>.

<sup>7</sup> George W. Zuo, 2021. "Wired and Hired: Employment Effects of Subsidized Broadband Internet for Low-Income Americans," 13 American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 447 (Aug. 2021).

<sup>8</sup> Blair Levin, "Washington May Be About to Take a Giant Step Backward in Closing the Digital Divide," Brookings (Mar. 13, 2023), <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2023/03/13/washington-may-be-about-to-take-a-giant-step-backward-in-closing-the-digital-divide/>.

ACP reduces the size of the subsidy needed to incentivize broadband deployment in rural areas by 25 percent.<sup>9</sup> ACP makes BEAD program dollars go farther. Sustained funding is critical as broadband companies and others consider the level of public and private investment needed to fulfill Congress' goal of universal affordable broadband deployment and adoption.

Thank you for the work you have done already to make high-speed internet affordable and accessible across the country and for your attention to the critical concerns we have raised here. If you have any questions about the issues raised in this letter, please feel free to contact Anita Banerji, senior director of the media/tech program, at [banerji@civilrights.org](mailto:banerji@civilrights.org), or Jonathan Walter, media/tech policy counsel, at [walter@civilrights.org](mailto:walter@civilrights.org).

Sincerely,

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
#OaklandUndivided  
18 Million Rising  
Advocates for Basic Legal Equality  
AHIMA Foundation  
All4Ed  
Alliance for Community Media  
Alliance for Digital Equity (Western Massachusetts)  
Alternate ROOTS  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Civil Liberties Union  
American Federation of Teachers  
American Library Association  
Americans for Democratic Action (ADA)  
Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC  
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)  
Asian Health Services  
Austin Free-Net  
Autistic Self-Advocacy Network  
Baltimore County Public Library  
Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition  
Baystate Health  
Benefits Data Trust  
Benton Institute for Broadband & Society  
Bitwise Impact

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<sup>9</sup> Kelsey Clark, et al., “Closing the Digital Divide Benefits Everyone, Not Just the Disconnected: An Analysis of How Universal Connectivity Benefits Education, Health Care, Government Services, and Employment,” Common Sense Media (2022), <https://www.common Sense Media.org/research/closing-the-digital-divide-benefits-everyone-not-just-the-unconnected>.

Black Women's Roundtable  
BoomTown  
Byte Back  
CanCode Communities  
Center for Changing Lives  
Center for Rural Strategies  
City of Chicago  
City of Cleveland  
City of Philadelphia  
City of San Antonio  
City of San Jose  
Civic Nation  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Color of Change  
Common Cause  
Common Cause Delaware  
Common Cause Georgia  
Common Cause MN  
Common Cause New Mexico  
Common Sense Media  
Communications Workers of America  
Community Tech Network  
Compudopt  
Computers 2 Kids  
Connect Your Community Institute  
Cuyahoga County  
Demand Progress  
DigitalC  
Duluth Public Access Community Television  
East Baton Rouge Parish Library  
EducationSuperHighway  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities  
Energy Outreach Colorado  
EveryLibrary Institute NFP  
EveryoneOn  
Fair Count  
Florida Nonprofit Alliance  
Florida Philanthropic Network  
Frederick County Health Care Coalition  
Free Press Action  
Fully Equipped 4 Life Training Solutions

GWI, Inc  
HALOS  
Hispanic Federation  
Houston Information Technology Services  
Human-I-T  
IBSA, Inc  
Impact Fund  
Institute for Local Self-Reliance  
Japanese American Citizens League  
JustLeadership USA  
Kansas Office of Broadband Development  
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement  
League of Women Voters of the United States  
LifeLong Medical Care  
Link Oregon (Oregon Fiber Partnership)  
Lit Communities Broadband, Inc.  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation  
Long Beach Gray Panthers  
Low Income Utility Advocacy Project  
Lummi Indian Business Council  
MACS 2030 – Minnesotans for the American Community Survey and 2030 Census  
MakeIT Haverhill  
MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund)  
Marconi Society  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Media Alliance  
MediaJustice  
Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council (MMTC)  
NAACP  
National Action Network  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of Housing Cooperatives  
National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA)  
National Black Justice Coalition  
National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR)  
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation  
National Consumer Law Center, on behalf of its low-income clients  
National Consumers League  
National Digital Equity Center  
National Digital Inclusion Alliance  
National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)

National Fair Housing Alliance  
National Hispanic Media Coalition  
National Organization for Women  
National Skills Coalition  
National Urban League  
National Women's Law Center  
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice  
New America's Open Technology Institute  
Next Century Cities  
NTEN  
Open MIC  
Oregon State University Extension Services  
Parents as Teachers  
Partners Bridging the Digital Divide  
PCs for People  
Pennsylvania Utility Law Project  
PFLAG National  
Public Knowledge  
Pullman Public Schools  
Right Here, Right Now Project  
ROC United  
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition  
SETDA  
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)  
Sojourners  
Sonoma County Library  
Southeast Community Development Corporation  
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future  
SUNY #EmTech  
Tech Goes Home  
Technology Learning Collaborative  
The ARC of the United States  
The Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce  
The Children's Agenda  
The Children's Partnership  
The Education Trust  
The Greelining Institute  
The Public Utility Law Project of NY  
The STEM Alliance  
Tricounty Cradle to Career Collaborative  
TURN – The Utility Reform Network  
UnidosUS  
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry



United Steelworkers  
Universal LLC  
US Ignite  
Valley Vision  
Virginia Citizens Consumer Council  
Virginia Society for Technology in Education  
VOICES for Alabama's Children  
Volunteers of America National Services  
Westchester Library  
Women Employed  
YISD

CC: The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
The Honorable Bill Hagerty, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General  
Government  
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member, House Committee on Appropriations  
The Honorable Steny Hoyer, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Financial Services and General  
Government