

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 23, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you work with Congress to provide additional economic relief for Americans impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, we urge you to support dedicated funding for small broadband providers to keep students and low-income families connected to the internet.

Since the onset of the pandemic, unemployment claims have surged^[1] and states across the country have closed schools in an effort to limit the spread of the virus,^[2] leaving students and families to rely on internet connectivity to work, learn from home, search for employment, and access telehealth services. Many small broadband providers have committed to sustaining critical broadband services and upgrades for students and low-income families who cannot afford payment during this public health crisis. But these small broadband providers—which contribute to more than 77,000 jobs and support more than \$10 billion in economic activity in the United States^[3]—may be unable to continue to provide these services if customers are unable to pay for a prolonged period of time.

Although the CARES Act included funding for rural broadband deployment, it did not include dedicated funding to help small broadband providers sustain services and upgrades for students and low-income families. Without support from your Administration, small providers may be unable to ensure that the communities they serve have access to critical internet connectivity.

It is for this reason that we introduced the bipartisan Keeping Critical Connections Act to establish a temporary emergency relief fund at the Federal Communications Commission to help small broadband providers continue providing critical internet connectivity for students and low-income families throughout the pandemic. Our bill has broad bipartisan support, in addition to support from small and rural broadband providers and rural broadband advocates. We now urge you to support the inclusion of this funding in the next expected relief package to ensure that small broadband providers can keep their communities connected at this critical time.

^[1]Chaney, Sarah and Guilford, Gwynn. (2020, April 23). *Another 4.4 Million Americans Sought Unemployment Benefits Last Week*. The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved from <https://www.wsj.com/articles/millions-of-u-s-workers-continue-to-seek-unemployment-help-amid-coronavirus-11587634201>

^[2]Map: Coronavirus and School Closures. (2020, April 21). Education Week. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures.html>

^[3]Gallardo, Roberto and Kumar, Indraneel. (2019, August). *Job Creation from Rural Broadband Companies*. Purdue University. Retrieved from <https://www.ntca.org/ruralischool/newsroom/press-releases/2019/6/rural-broadband-powers-thousands-jobs-and-billions>

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We stand ready to work with you to help small broadband companies provide critical internet connectivity for students and low-income families.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress