

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 19, 2023

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick McHenry
Speaker Pro Tempore
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer, Speaker Pro Tempore McHenry, Leader McConnell, and Leader Jeffries:

We write to urge you to extend funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP); which provides over 21 million working families with financial assistance for broadband access; to help bridge the digital divide so they can continue to afford the broadband services they need for work, school, health care, and more.¹

The ACP has been crucial to increasing broadband connectivity for millions of Americans, allowing them to maximize educational opportunities, stimulate economic growth, lower health care costs, and increase telehealth opportunities, while also ensuring that Americans can access the tools necessary to succeed in our growing and diversifying economy. As you finalize a government appropriations package, we urge you to include full funding for the ACP as well as a long-term solution that provides a sustainable, responsible funding stream, so that millions of Americans don't lose access to critical connectivity services.

Established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the ACP lowers the out-of-pocket cost of broadband service and devices for working families. The program provides a monthly discount of up to \$30.00 per month off the cost of Internet service and equipment as well as a one-time discount of up to \$100 off a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet.² In qualifying rural communities and qualifying Tribal lands, the monthly discount may be up to \$75.00 per month.³ This means that hardworking families across the country, small business owners, veterans, and seniors are all able to receive financial assistance to afford high-speed internet.

¹ ACP Enrollment and Claims Tracker. Universal Service Administrative Company. Accessed October 2023. <https://www.usac.org/about/affordable-connectivity-program/acp-enrollment-and-claims-tracker/>

² FY 2024 Congressional Budget Justification for the Federal Communications Commission. March 13, 2023. <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fy-2024-congressional-budget-justification>

³ Rosenworcel Statement: FCC Acts to Provide Subsidy for Consumers in Certain High-Cost Areas. August 4, 2023. <https://www.fcc.gov/document/fcc-acts-provide-subsidy-consumers-certain-high-cost-areas/rosenworcel-statement-0>

We know how important having reliable broadband is to the over 21 million households participating in the ACP, representing approximately 41 percent of eligible households enrolled nationwide.⁴ More are signing up every day because they need assistance to afford broadband where they live, work, and learn. At the current rate of usage, if Congress does not appropriate additional funds to the ACP, the program's funds will be exhausted in just a few short months, several years earlier than the target date in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.⁵

Should ACP funding not be extended, millions of Americans could be at risk of losing access to broadband. We would take significant steps backward in the progress we've already made to connect more Americans to the internet through additional federal broadband investments. In just the last 6 months, we've invested billions of dollars to build out critical infrastructure, making sure the most rural areas of our country have access to broadband services. The ACP ensures families can now afford those services. We cannot let them face a connectivity cliff by letting this program run out of money with no future assistance.

Failing to extend funding would be irresponsible. Without an extension, nearly 21 million families already enrolled in the ACP will lose access to affordable broadband services that are critical to their everyday lives; and, should this funding lapse, hardworking families previously enrolled in the ACP would have to go through the process of reenrolling, creating unnecessary obstacles for obtaining affordable, reliable broadband.

Thanks to the ACP, access to broadband services is becoming a reality for families and providing new opportunities for success. If this is the digital future, we cannot shut people out. We must extend funding for this vital program to ensure that the families already signed up, and the millions of other families that are still eligible to sign up, are not forced off a program that has given them a lifeline to access high-speed internet, including essential access to work, school, and health care services. We urge you to extend funding for the ACP in a government appropriations package and include a long-term solution that ensures efficient spending of taxpayer dollars. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

⁴ "ACP Dashboard." A project of the Community Broadband Networks initiative at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance. Accessed in October 2023 at <https://acpdashboard.com/>.


⁵ "ACP Dashboard." cited above.

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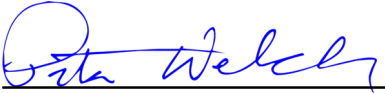
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Tammy Baldwin
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Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



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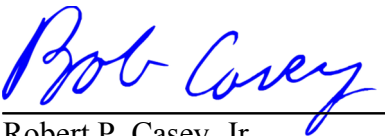
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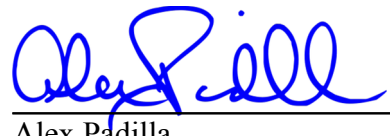
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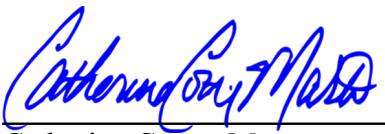
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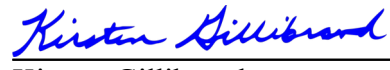
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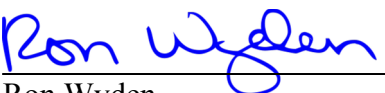
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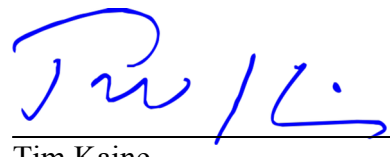
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



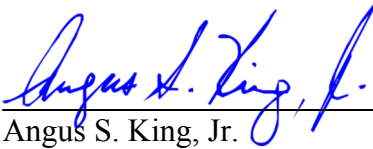
Kirsten Gillibrand
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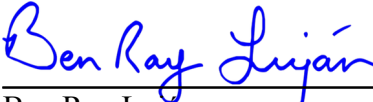
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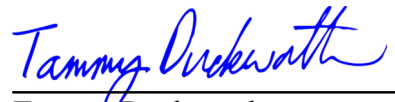
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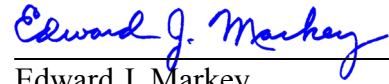
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

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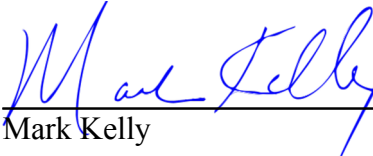
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Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



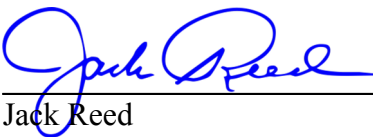
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