April 6, 2020

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We write to urge you to include dedicated funding in any future legislation to help ensure small broadband providers can keep students and low-income families connected during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Many students and low-income families are facing financial hardships due to the pandemic need assistance from small broadband providers—many of which have already committed to sustain critical internet services and provide upgrades to ensure that the most vulnerable among us stay connected.

In recent weeks, unemployment claims have surged,[1] and schools across the country have closed in an effort to limit the spread of coronavirus,[2] leaving many Americans—including low-income families and students—without critical internet connectivity. Many small broadband providers have committed to continue providing voice and broadband services and upgrades despite ongoing economic hardships facing many Americans. Small 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 sustain services if customers are unable to pay for a prolonged period of time, jeopardizing broadband connectivity for customers all across this country.

Without action from Congress, small providers may be unable to continue to help ensure that the communities they serve can access distance learning and telehealth services.

It is for this reason that we introduced the bipartisan Keeping Critical Connections Act, which now has 11 cosponsors in the House and 17 in the Senate. While the third coronavirus relief

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package included funding for rural broadband deployment, it did not include funding to help small broadband providers sustain services and upgrades for students and low-income families. We now urge you to include funding in the next expected relief package for a temporary emergency relief fund at the Federal Communications Commission to help small broadband providers continue these critical services for students and low-income families throughout the pandemic.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We stand ready to work with you to help small broadband companies keep communities connected at this critical time.

Sincerely,

__________________________  _________________________
Amy Klobuchar               Kevin Cramer
United States Senator       United States Senator

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Peter Welch                 Roger Marshall, M.D.
Member of Congress           Member of Congress

__________________________  _________________________
Tina Smith                  Todd Young
United States Senator       United States Senator

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Tammy Baldwin               John Hoeven
United States Senator       United States Senator

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Jon Tester                  Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator       United States Senator
Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator

Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

Anthony Brindisi
Member of Congress

Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Troy Balderson
Member of Congress

Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress

Steve Watkins
Member of Congress
Elise Stefanik  
Member of Congress

Don Young  
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley, P.E.  
Member of Congress