

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 17, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

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

Dear Speaker McCarthy, Leader Schumer, Leader Jeffries, and Leader McConnell:

We are writing to urge you to extend funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides families with financial assistance for broadband access, to help bridge the digital divide. Congress has a role in ensuring that high-speed and reliable broadband is accessible to every household, nationwide. We urge you to include full funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in the upcoming government appropriations bill to ensure that households can access the broadband they desperately need.

In the Twenty-first Century, broadband connectivity is essential to maximizing educational opportunities, stimulating economic growth, lowering health care costs, investing in a skilled workforce, and connecting individuals with their loved ones. We saw during the pandemic how critical broadband access is to everything, from getting an education to health care to telemedicine to working from home. Unfortunately, one in five American households lack access to broadband.¹ Nearly 40 percent of eligible Americans rely on ACP to maintain internet access and that number is rapidly growing.² Current funding is expected to be depleted by 2024 creating an urgent need to extend funding.³^[4]

¹ “Switched Off: Why Are One in Five U.S. Households Not Online?” *National Telecommunications and Information Administration*. 2022. Retrieved from: <https://ntia.gov/blog/2022/switched-why-are-one-five-us-households-not-online>.

² “Affordable Connectivity Program.” *Institute for Local Self-Reliance*. 19 Jun. 2023. Retrieved from: <https://acpdashboard.com/>.

³ “Understanding the Potential Reach of the Affordable Connectivity Program.” *Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University*. 4 May 2022. Retrieved from: <https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/publication/2022/affordable-connectivity-program>

⁴ De Wit, Kathryn. “Closing the Digital Divide with the Affordable Connectivity Program.” *The Pew Charitable Trusts*. 7 Jun. 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2023/06/01/closing-the-digital-divide-with-the-affordable-connectivity-program>

ACP provides financial assistance that enables families to access broadband so that no one in our society is left behind. It helps families, Pell Grant recipients, and veterans afford high-speed broadband services — from monthly internet bills to installation fees and computer expenses, which often create significant financial burdens. Specifically, ACP provides eligible households with up to \$30 per month towards their internet bills, and a one-time subsidy of \$100 towards desktops, laptops, or tablet computers for children and hardworking families.⁵

We cannot afford to let millions of Americans lose access to broadband. If funding for ACP is not extended, it would not only put the program’s success at risk, but also impede the progress of other federal broadband investments and initiatives. Families and businesses across the country need broadband access, and ACP has become a vital tool in securing this access. It plays a critical role in connecting households, while also promoting digital literacy, device distribution, technical support, and online services training, resulting in its high enrollment and strong bipartisan support.

However, connecting every American to high-speed, affordable broadband requires a public-private partnership, and it is the federal government’s responsibility to provide secure and reliable investments. With millions of families still lacking access to a service that has become essential for education, health care, and the economy, time is of the essence.

We have a unique window of opportunity to ensure that every family and child — rural, urban, and suburban — have access to affordable broadband, and can thrive in the digital age. ACP has become a lifeline for Americans, and we cannot afford to let it expire. We strongly urge you to prioritize the extension of funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program in the upcoming government appropriations bill. Failure to extend funding would not only leave millions of families without access to the internet but also hinder our long-term competitiveness as a nation.

Sincerely,

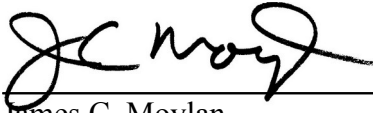


Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

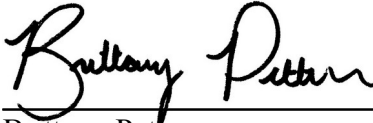
⁵ For households residing on qualifying Tribal Lands, ACP offers up to \$75 per month. (“Affordable Connectivity Program.” *Federal Communications Commission*. 2023. Retrieved from: <https://www.fcc.gov/acp>.)



James C. Moylan
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress



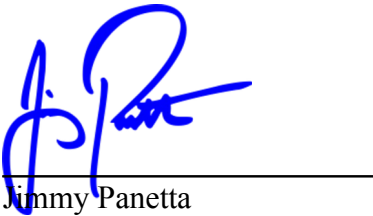
David J. Trone
Member of Congress



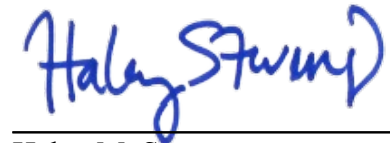
David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



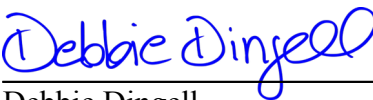
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



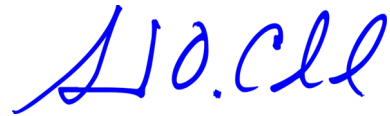
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



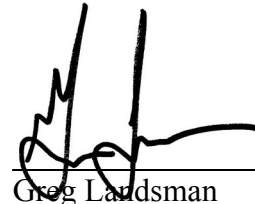
Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



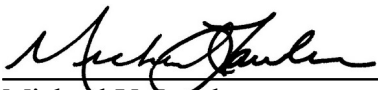
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



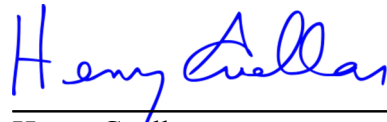
Susie Lee
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress



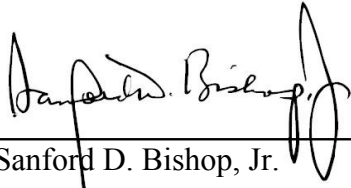
Henry Cuellar
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Young Kim
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Chris Pappas
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Bradley Scott Schneider
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Marcus J. Molinaro
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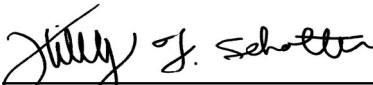
Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



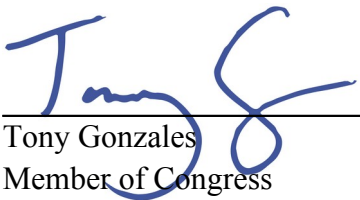
Donald G. Davis
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Hillary J. Scholten
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Angie Craig
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Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



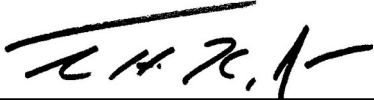
Jenniffer González-Colón
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Juan Ciscomani
Member of Congress



Thomas H. Kean, Jr.
Member of Congress



Lori Chavez-DeRemer
Member of Congress



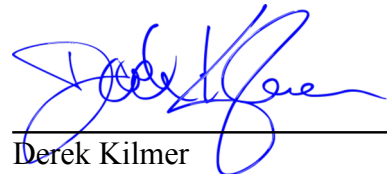
Nick LaLota
Member of Congress



Nancy Mace
Member of Congress



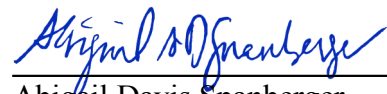
Andrew R. Garbarino
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Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



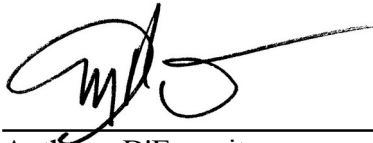
Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress

Ed Case

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Don Bacon

Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Anthony D'Esposito
Member of Congress