



TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
CHARLES "DOC" ANDERSON

STATE REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICT 56
TEXAS LEGISLATIVE RURAL CAUCUS, CHAIRMAN
TEXAS LEGISLATIVE AEROSPACE CAUCUS, VICE -CHAIR
COMMITTEES: AGRICULTURE & LIVESTOCK, VICE CHAIRMAN • ENERGY RESOURCES

July 27, 2023

The Honorable Ted Cruz
United States Senator
167 Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cruz,

Eliminating the digital divide is a top priority in Texas. As you know, every rural Texan has something to gain from high speed internet connection, regardless of occupation or economic means.

But it's not just Texas – it's America. That is why President Trump established the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB), a program that transitioned into the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). This program is established to run out of funding within the next year. If Congress does not come to an agreement on how to extend this critical program's funding, the results will be dire, even for your home state.

ACP is important for rural Texas and for communities of the state that struggle financially. Currently, of the 4.3 million eligible Texas households to participate in ACP, just over 1.4 million do, and 36% of households in Texas with incomes less than \$20,000 lack connectivity. A primary barrier preventing Texans online is affordability. The ACP enables households that would otherwise be unable to afford an internet subscription to do so by providing a significant monthly discount, in turn allowing our country as a whole to chip away at the digital divide.

But the ACP also plays a big role in our efforts to expand broadband infrastructure to the unserved, rural communities that have been neglected for far too long. This is due to the complementary effect it will have on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. A recent study from the Boston Consulting Group found that the ACP's existence reduced the subsidy needed to incentivize providers to build in rural areas by 25% per household, significantly reducing the speed at which BEAD funds will be drained. Without the ACP, broadband infrastructure deployments will undoubtedly cost more, the BEAD program will be unable to reach its full potential, and some rural Texans will continue to go without the internet access that they so desperately need.

These factors have caused Republican voters and Republican leaders alike to express their support for the ACP. This includes Texas Governor Greg Abbott, who has praised ACP for enabling "more families and businesses [to] be able to afford high-speed internet."

Texas has lived up to its promise by taking measures to expand broadband throughout the Lone Star State, but now we are counting on you to help ensure that this invaluable Affordable Connectivity Program funding does not expire. If Congress does not take action, nearly half a million Texans enrolled in ACP would likely lose their connectivity if the program were allowed to expire. We appreciate your continual support for Rural Texans.

For Texas,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles 'Doc' Anderson".

Charles "Doc" Anderson
Chairman, Texas Legislative Rural Caucus





Representative Stan Kitzman



Representative Erin Ziener



Representative Frederick Frazier



Representative David Spiller



Representative Keith Bell



Representative Geanie Morrison



Senator Morgan Lamantia



Representative Lyn Stucky



Representative Mihaela Plesa



Representative Jon Rosenthal



Chairman DeWayne Burns



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Representative Gary VanDeaver



Representative Angelia Orr



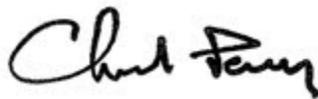
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