



CITY OF PITTSBURGH
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR ED GAINEY

September 15, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

I am sending this letter out of deep concern over the fate of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which analysts believe could run out of funding in the early part of 2024.

Like you, I am committed to ensuring that the people I represent have access to the necessities for a healthy, prosperous, and fulfilling life. High-speed internet has proven to be one of those necessities, given its growing role in how we communicate and deliver services. As is too often the case, communities of color lack the necessary digital resources for modern life at a pronounced rate, making our fight to overcome the digital divide an essential aspect of our nation's broader racial equity efforts.

Without high-speed internet, economic opportunities are drastically narrowed, access to critical healthcare services is harder to come by, and classroom success is harder for students of all ages. Contrarily, the internet can serve as a great equalizer. Low-income communities and communities of color that have far too often been deprived of access to critical resources gain seamless access to them because they now have a lifeline that touches every industry.

A low level of income and an inability to afford the cost of a high-speed internet subscription is the most significant obstacle preventing Americans from being online. Thanks to your administration's efforts, the ACP was created. It's also why the consequences of not extending the ACP would be disastrous for Americans nationwide, including in Pittsburgh.

In its early yet deeply impactful existence, the ACP has proven to be the most important tool at our disposal to close the digital divide. In Pittsburgh alone, nearly 22,000 households are enrolled; across the nation, the number of enrolled households is over 20 million. Suppose the program's funding is allowed to expire. In that case, vulnerable communities will not only be in danger of being cut off from their connection but also from the countless essential services that

come with it, and the disparities that we continue to make progress in closing will widen drastically.

With the program's funding dwindling, I ask that your administration prioritize preserving the ACP. We mustn't allow the tens of millions of Americans who depend upon this program to have the rug pulled out from underneath them. The ramifications would be disastrous, and there is no telling how long it would take to regain the progress this program has allowed us to make in bridging the digital divide.

I am deeply grateful for your attention to this vital cause.

Yours in Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ed Gainey', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ed Gainey, Mayor
City of Pittsburgh
Pronouns: He/Him/His

CC:

Tom Perez, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
Stephen Benjamin, Director of the Office of Public Engagement