

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 6, 2023

Hon. Kay Granger
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. Steve Womack
Subcommittee Chairman
Financial Services and General Government
House of Representatives
2000 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Granger and Subcommittee Chairman Womack:

As Members of the New York delegation, we are writing to urge you to allocate \$7 billion for the critical Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) via a manager amendment when the fiscal year 2024 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill is brought to the House floor or through any emergency supplemental appropriations package taken up by Congress. As you know, the ACP provides over 1.5 million New York working-class households and over 21 million American households nationwide with financial assistance for broadband access, helping bridge the digital divide.¹ We cannot risk losing a tool that helps close the opportunity divide for students, provides telehealth for vulnerable homebound individuals, and employment connectivity for jobseekers.

Created in 2021 as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the ACP is popular with overwhelming bipartisan support. Due to an upcoming lapse of funds, it is now in jeopardy of ending and, potentially, leaving over 21 million American households unable to afford internet access if Congress fails to act. The ACP ensures that millions of low-income American families and veterans can access the internet for work, school, telemedicine, and other purposes. The ACP is the only program that provides families experiencing financial challenges and economic hardships with up to \$30 per month towards their internet bills and provides households in certain rural, insular, and tribal areas with up to \$75 a month towards their internet bills. In addition, the program provides a one-time subsidy of \$100 towards desktops, laptops, or tablets for eligible families. Keeping the ACP alive brings us one step closer to a more equitable society by removing barriers to internet access and promoting economic opportunities.

In New York, almost 50% of eligible households currently take advantage of this federal benefit, with New York being one of the leading states in the nation for ACP enrollment.² In addition, the ACP has a significant impact on public housing residents in New York, who often face barriers to accessing affordable and reliable broadband service. Only 30 to 40% of the New York City Housing Authority's (NYCHA) residents have broadband access compared with 97.5% of all New Yorkers.^{3,4} The ACP helps bridge this digital divide by

¹ "The Impact of the Affordable Connectivity Program." *NCTA*, 3 Oct. 2023, www.ncta.com/whats-new/the-impact-of-the-affordable-connectivity-program#:~:text=ACP%20has%20already%20outperformed%20the%20previous%20FCC%20Lifeline,that%20can%20help%20connect%20more%20Americans.%20More%20items.

² "ACP Data." *EducationSuperHighway*, Aug. 2023, www.educationsuperhighway.org/no-home-left-offline/acp-data/.

³ McLean, Danielle. "NYC to Give Free High-Speed Internet to Public Housing Residents." *Smart Cities Dive*, 23 Sept. 2022, www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/nyc-free-internet-public-housing/632508/.

⁴ DiNapoli, Thomas. "Availability, Access and Affordability: Understanding Broadband Challenges in New York State." *Office of the New York State Comptroller*, Sept. 2021, www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/availability-access-and-affordability-understanding-broadband-challenges-new-york-state.

providing financial assistance to NYCHA residents and other public housing tenants across the state, thus playing an important role in helping public housing residents achieve self-sufficiency.

To maintain the progress we have made to close the national digital divide and further promote economic independence, we implore you to include \$7 billion for the ACP via a manager amendment when the fiscal year 2024 Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill is brought to the House floor or through any emergency supplemental appropriations package taken up by Congress. Without this funding, tens of millions of households would suddenly see their bills increase significantly and many could be forced to cancel their high-speed broadband service and be disconnected from education, health, and job opportunities. This would be a devastating setback for our efforts to close the digital divide and ensure digital equity for all Americans.

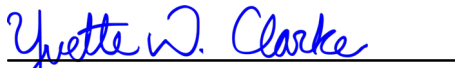
Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

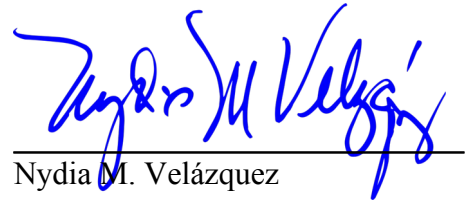
Sincerely,



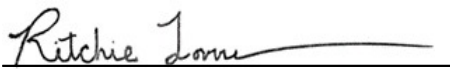
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



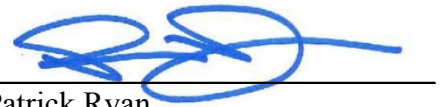
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



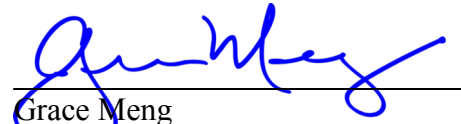
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress