

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
1-1-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer,

Thank you for the inclusion of broadband and telehealth provisions in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to support American workers, students, and patients who face being disconnected from essential services and information during this crisis. The lack of internet access was already a problem for millions of Americans, and the COVID-19 crisis has only exacerbated the situation.

Over the last several weeks, our offices have heard countless stories from our constituents who are unable to telework, support their children's virtual education, consult with doctors, connect with loved ones, or receive essential services because of the lack of broadband connectivity or affordability in their community. More than 30 million Americans have filed for unemployment since the pandemic started and schools across the country have closed and cancelled classes to slow the spread of COVID-19. We therefore believe that future stimulus packages should support the deployment of secure and resilient broadband, provide hotspots for students to close the homework gap and allow for distance learning, and expand access and affordability for unserved and underserved communities with sufficient speed and data that reflects American families' increased reliance on internet access.

We believe that in the response to the COVID-19 crisis an overall investment of at least \$86 billion is needed. This would expedite high-speed broadband deployment and expand funding to ensure that Americans who need broadband service can remain connected during this public health crisis and recovery. This should include emergency broadband benefits for low-income consumers that meet the demands of telework, telehealth and telelearning.

Setting up and successfully utilizing distance learning tools can be a challenge in the best of times, but the Coronavirus has placed an added urgency in ensuring all students can connect to digital education resources. We believe an emergency expansion of the E-Rate educational connectivity programs is needed to help schools connect students that do not have a home Internet connection, digital equipment, or cannot access school and community facilities (libraries, recreation centers). While we employ interim measures to address the immediate need and bridge the connectivity gap, we must also invest in the high-speed broadband deployment necessary to reach every unserved and underserved American family, hospital, school and small business. It is important that we protect taxpayer dollars and ensure federal resources are used efficiently by leveraging competition to connect all Americans to future-proof broadband networks. We should also continue to support robust funding in Rural Utility Service (RUS) programs like the ReConnect Program, Telecommunication Infrastructure Loans and Loan Guarantees, Community Connect Grants, and Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grants. If we fail to invest now, millions of American will be disconnected from the economic recovery on the other side of this crisis.

For these programs to be most effective, coordination among federal agencies is necessary to streamline the application process for assistance from federal programs and to ensure broadband-related support is being administered in an efficient, technology-neutral, and financially sustainable manner. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it increasingly clear that having access to high speed broadband is a necessity. We must invest in expanding affordable and reliable high-speed Internet access in the next emergency relief package. We thank you for your attention to this critical issue and looking forward to working in tandem to bring broadband to communities that are in desperate need of this essential tool for life in the 21st Century.

Sincerely,



David Trone  
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress

/s/  
James E. Clyburn  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Marc Veasey  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
André Carson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

/s/  
TJ Cox  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ed Case  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress

/s/  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Matt Cartwright  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jim Costa  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Gregorio Kilili Camacho  
Sablan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Angie Craig  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Michael F.Q. San Nicolas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Cindy Axne  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Dean Phillips  
Member of Congress

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Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress

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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

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Debbie Mucarsel-Powell  
Member of Congress

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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress

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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress

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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress

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Cedric L. Richmond  
Member of Congress

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Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress

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David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

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Grace Meng  
Member of Congress

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Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

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William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

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John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

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Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

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Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Member of Congress

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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

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Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

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Joe Cunningham  
Member of Congress

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Antonio Delgado  
Member of Congress

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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress