Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 17, 2023

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

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader  Minority Leader
United States Senate  United States Senate
Washington, DC  20510  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.\(^3\)\(^4\)

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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

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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
Member of Congress

Young Kim
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress
Ed Case
Member of Congress

Don Bacon
Member of Congress

Anthony D'Esposito
Member of Congress