October 30, 2023

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representative
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries,

As members of the New Democrat Coalition, we write to advocate for the inclusion of $6 billion in additional funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in any government funding package, to reflect the President’s Fiscal Year 2024 emergency supplemental funding request. The ACP provides critical financial assistance to help American households afford broadband internet services. Access to high-speed and affordable broadband is vital to participating in our 21st-century economy. Communities without sufficient internet connectivity struggle to keep pace in a rapidly changing world increasingly dependent on technology. The New Democrat Coalition is committed to closing this digital divide and the ACP is a necessary tool to accomplish this goal.

Established in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the ACP currently provides broadband subsidies to more than 21 million households throughout the country. The program has had great success as millions of families who previously could not get online or struggled to pay for broadband access are now connected to the internet. By helping to secure broadband access, the ACP has allowed millions of Americans to maximize educational opportunities, increase telehealth opportunities, stimulate economic growth, and connect with loved ones.

At the current rate of enrollment, the ACP’s funding will be exhausted as imminently as early next year. Failure to renew funding for the ACP would once again make low-cost broadband internet service unaffordable for millions of families, resulting in a significant loss of internet connectivity nationwide. This would be a significant step backwards in the progress Congress has made to connect more Americans to the internet through additional federal broadband investments.

The loss of the ACP would also reduce the efficacy of Congress’ groundbreaking $42 billion investment in the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program. A recent study found that the ACP reduces the subsidy amount needed to incentivize broadband deployment in rural areas by 25 percent per-household. The ACP is necessary to maximize BEAD program dollars intended to build out our nation’s broadband infrastructure and ensure that no community gets left behind.

Congress has recognized, on a bipartisan basis, that every American must be connected to the internet to prosper and compete in a 21st-century economy. We cannot risk millions of families losing access to the internet service they depend on every day by allowing the ACP to lapse. We stand with the Biden Administration in recognizing the ACP as a critical service for American families and a priority for our country. As you work to finalize a government funding package, we urge you to include robust funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program to sustain the program through December of 2024. This funding will keep Americans connected as Congress continues to work to develop a permanent funding pathway for this critical broadband program.

Sincerely,

Ann McLane Kuster
Chair
New Democrat Coalition

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress

Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress

Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress
Nikki Budzinski
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Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Troy Carter
Member of Congress

Joaquin Castro
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Gerald E. Connolly
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Jim Costa
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Seth Moulton  
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Frank J. Mrvan  
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Wiley Nickel  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress

Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress

Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress

Stacey E. Plaskett  
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress
Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress

Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress

Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress

David J. Trone  
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress

Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress

Susan Wild  
Member of Congress

Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress
cc: Chair of Senate Committee on Appropriations, Senator Patty Murray
    Vice Chair of Senate Committee on Appropriations, Senator Susan Collins
    Chair of House Committee on Appropriations, Rep. Kay Granger
    Ranking Member of House Committee on Appropriations, Rep. Rosa DeLauro