

November 17, 2017

997

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai,

We write in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice seeking comment on the sufficiency of the E-Rate program's formula for category two services, which provides schools and libraries support for Wi-Fi and internal connections. We urge you to protect the E-Rate program and resist any proposal to prematurely modify category two funding.


The E-Rate program is an essential source of federal funding to connect the nation's schools and libraries to the internet. These institutions are vital outlets to help connect all Americans, including millions of students and Americans in rural parts of the country. For many, these schools and libraries are the only source of free public internet access, and play a critical role in helping close the digital divide.

As smartphones and tablets became nearly ubiquitous throughout society, the FCC modernized the E-Rate program in 2014, making funds available to expand Wi-Fi networks in schools and libraries across the nation. The modernization provided schools and libraries the resources they need to build out their Wi-Fi networks, helping ensure that our students and underserved Americans are not left behind as we transition into an increasingly wireless world.

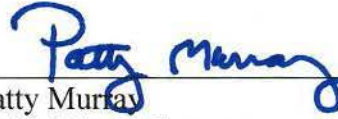
When the Commission approved the modernization, the FCC directed the Wireline Competition Bureau to compile a report on the adequacy of the funding level for category two services by the opening of the 2019 program year. While we appreciate the Bureau's eagerness to begin this evaluation well in advance of the deadline, we believe it is premature to evaluate the adequacy of the modernization, given its recent implementation and utilization. The expanded funding for category two services has only been available to schools and libraries for three filing periods. Applicants are given the flexibility to file for category two services anytime in the five-year period and may be planning to tap these resources later in the five-year window, making it impossible to fully evaluate the program's effectiveness at this time. We urge the commission to not prematurely make modifications to this important source of funding, which helps ensure all Americans – whether urban or rural, rich or poor – remain connected and competitive in this global economy.

We thank you for your attention to this important matter. If you would like additional information about our request, please contact Daniel Greene in Senator Markey's office (202 – 224 – 2742).

Sincerely,



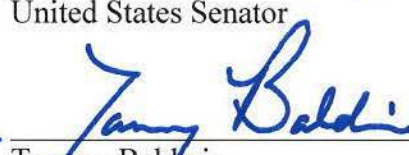
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Al Franken
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



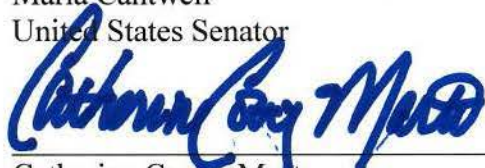
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
United States Senate
255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Markey:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

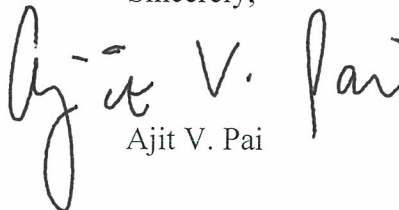
In 2014, the Commission adopted five-year budgets for schools and libraries purchasing category two services, including the services and equipment needed for Wi-Fi in classrooms. This rule replaced the old "two in five" rule, which made planning for category two services and equipment difficult for many schools and libraries. But this rule change was temporary—it went into effect in funding year 2015 and will sunset in funding year 2020. To help the Commission decide whether to renew this approach, the Commission directed the Bureau to monitor and provide a report on category two applicant budgets using data gathered in funding years 2015 through 2018. The Bureau's report to the Commission is due before the filing window for funding year 2019 opens next year.

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The comment cycle for the Public Notice has closed and Bureau staff is carefully reviewing the submissions. The Bureau will take into consideration the issues and concerns presented by all stakeholders.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Al Franken
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Franken:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

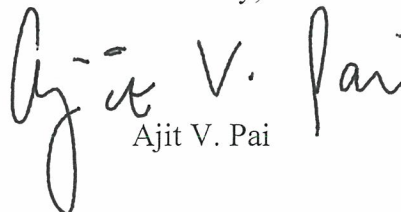
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
B85 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hassan:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

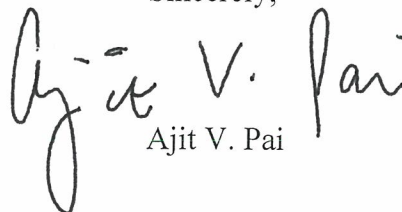
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Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

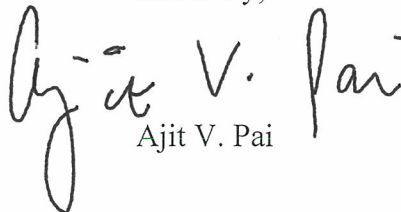
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I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ajit V. Pai". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ajit" being the most prominent part.

Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

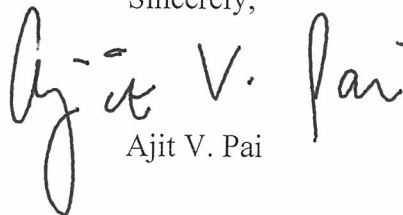
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Sincerely,


Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senate
B40A Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cortez Masto:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

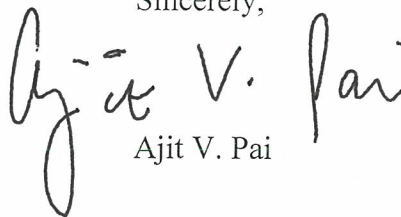
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

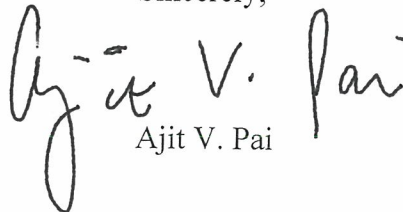
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

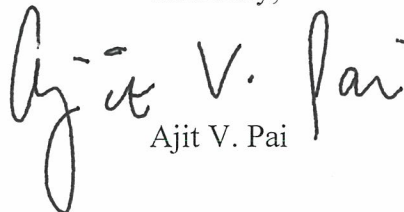
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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blumenthal:

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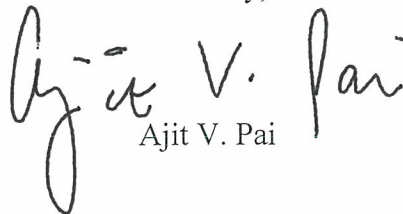
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Ajit V. Pai



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

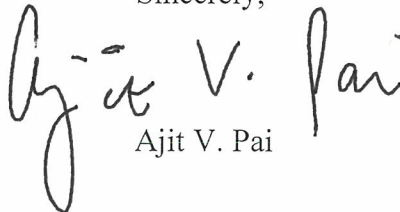
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 3, 2018

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

Thank you for your letter in response to the Wireline Competition Bureau's Public Notice regarding the E-Rate program's category two budgets. Your views are important and will be considered as the Bureau prepares its report for the Commission.

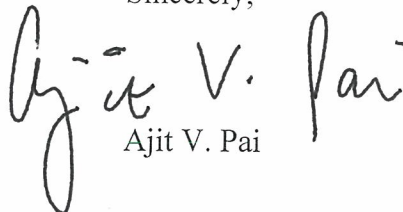
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