



IEEE

UNITED STATES ACTIVITIES

Promoting Career and Technology-Policy Interests of Electrical, Electronics and Computer Engineers

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CC 96-45

April 9, 1997

The Honorable Reed E. Hundt  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

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MAY 5 1997

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States Activities (IEEE-USA) recently approved the attached position paper on "Universal Access". Even though it is past the deadline for comment on Docket 96-45, we believe our paper will be helpful to you in formulating further policy.

This paper is the result of extensive deliberations and reflects IEEE-USA's experience with communications and health policy.

In particular, the position makes several recommendations directly pertinent to the FCC's deliberations in the Universal Service proceeding calling on the FCC to:

- Identify incentives to promote infrastructure development and encourage broadband network access by underserved populations; and
- Cooperate with local government and private sector entities to assist in aggregating demand for telecommunications networks and service.

The position also recommends that FCC universal access policies be flexible and subject to frequent review.

If you would like any additional information or have any questions, our staff contact in Washington is Deborah Rudolph, Manager of the IEEE-USA Technology Policy Council, at (202) 785-0017.

Sincerely,

Daniel R. Benigni  
Vice President-Professional Activities  
and  
Chair, United States Activities Board

DRB/dr:bc

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IEEE

## UNITED STATES ACTIVITIES BOARD

### POSITION STATEMENT

Promoting Career and Technology Policy Interests of Electrical, Electronics and Computer Engineers

## UNIVERSAL ACCESS

The ability for an authorized user to access secure information from anywhere within the United States via high capacity telecommunications network is called "universal access." This access should be available ubiquitously to facilitate multi-media broadband services for optimizing the delivery of public services, such as health care.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-United States Activities (IEEE-USA) recommends that:

- 1) The Federal Communications Commission and state public service commissions identify incentives or subsidies which will promote infrastructure development and encourage broadband network access by under-served populations and the deployment of high-speed advanced networks to serve low income segments of the population, persons with disabilities, as well as communities where the high cost of network development delivery have discouraged investments;
- 2) The Federal Communications Commission and state public service commissions cooperate with local governmental and private-sector entities to identify applications in health-care, education, library, economic development, corrections and other areas of public concern to enable communities and network providers to aggregate demand for telecommunications networks and services;
- 3) Contributions to universal service support mechanisms be open, explicit and competitively neutral; and all service providers in a particular area should contribute;
- 4) The private and non-profit sectors promote development of educational and training programs that would overcome fears of using new technologies and enhance public understanding of the value of advanced networks in specific applications such as education and health-care; and
- 5) Universal access policies be flexible and subject to frequent review. Technology changes extremely rapidly and regulation has not been able to keep pace.

The *1996 Telecommunications Act* charges the Federal Communications Commission with establishing policies for ensuring universal access in the new competitive environment. IEEE-USA recognizes that the Federal government, in conjunction with state governments, is required to continue to promote and encourage universal access for all the people of the United States, regardless of location, disability or economic status. Interactive telecommunications access points should include schools, facilities of primary care providers, government offices, libraries, post offices, community-based organizations, and, ultimately, homes.

In order to support the development of universal service, we offer the following observations:

- 1) Historically, universal service has meant availability of telephone services at reasonable cost. In the information age, this definition needs modification from the model of voice-grade communication, to include the availability at reasonable cost of both access to multi-media information services as well as networks that transport these information and multi-media services.

The universal service debate must also address the need to ensure that citizens receive the education, training and services they will require in order to have realistic access to these networks and services. A high degree of computer literacy will be required for members of the next generation to be functioning citizens and participants in the economy.

- 2) Different applications may have different technical requirements. For some, two-way voice and text will suffice; for others, two-way video will be necessary.

Medical applications (involving patients, health-care providers and diagnostic consultants) will require high bandwidth two-way communication.

- 3) Enhanced privacy, security and reliability must be part of the infrastructure if the national information highway is to fulfill its potential. These are especially critical and immediate needs in medical services.
- 4) Legal and technical standards are essential. The Federal government needs to enact a comprehensive privacy law to supersede conflicting state laws, so as to ensure that authorized users and consumers can safely send and receive sensitive personal information. In addition, minimal standards for system security should be defined.

This statement was developed by the Medical Technology Policy Committee of IEEE-USA and represents the considered judgment of a group of U.S. IEEE members with expertise in the subject field. IEEE-USA promotes the career and technology policy interests of the nearly 220,000 electrical, electronics and computer engineers who are U.S. members of the IEEE.

## **BACKGROUND**

The recent telecommunications law sets a goal of universal service for advanced telecommunications for all regions but addresses access to these services primarily in terms of making these services available and "affordable" for schools, libraries and health-care centers. While some libraries, schools and health-care centers can serve as appropriate sites for public access, use and training, they are not a substitute for needed widespread access by individuals in their homes. The focus of the law's implementation has now shifted to the Federal Communications Commission and the states. Other areas affecting universal service such as privacy, health-care licensure, and reimbursement for electronic delivery of health-care services, remain still to be dealt with by the Federal government.

- 1) Historically, the term "universal service" has meant the availability, at reasonable cost, of telephone service. The "service" in question has been a voice-grade communications connection between two users. In the information age, this definition is no longer sufficient.

Vital communication occurs between and among users and information and service providers. It encompasses not only voice but data, images and two-way interactive video communications.

The definition of "universal service" must also include the availability, at reasonable cost, of access to new multi-media communications and to information services. To use an analogy, it does little good to transport a person to the doors of a library or health-care center only to have that person find that obtaining the information or service within is prohibitively costly.

Therefore, IEEE-USA suggests that the term "universal service" must include access to both the infrastructure and to on-line information and services. This implies a need for non-proprietary information and publicly oriented services to be available at affordable cost.

- 2) The members of IEEE who are professionals in the information industry are particularly aware of the high degree of computer literacy that will be required for members of the next generation to be functioning citizens and participants in the economy. The universal service debate must consider the availability of the infrastructure required to ensure that our citizens can receive the education and training they need.
- 3) IEEE-USA observes that technology changes extremely rapidly and that frequently regulation is not able to keep pace.

From a technology standpoint, the current rate of change is unprecedented. IEEE-USA is aware that the rate of change will continue to accelerate in the foreseeable future. Only broad policies and frequent review will prevent policies from becoming obsolete.

- 4) The critical applications for universal access include but are not limited to health-care, education, E-mail, telecommuting, information and economic development.

In this final section we discuss the promises and challenges of the new information technologies in the health-care arena.

## **Health-care Implications**

Recent shifts in our health-care system from acute care to preventive and chronic care management, the emerging managed care and capitation health delivery systems, the growth in self-care and mutual-aid groups, and the increasing emphasis on the importance of preventive care require that Americans take more responsibility for their own health.

Universal access to more comprehensive health information, to effective preventive care, and to health-care professionals and resources is needed to deal with these trends. Curtailed hospital stays and the increasing percentage of the population living with chronic illness or disability require patients and their caregivers to be able to access health-care professionals and services in order to manage their care at home.

Consumer health informatics (CHI) initiatives now empower consumers (patients, caregivers, etc.) to access health-care information and tap electronic mutual support groups. Preliminary studies suggest that CHI programs can help cut health-care costs, extend services, and improve quality of life.

Telemedicine technology also makes it possible for homebound patients to receive much of their needed care electronically in their homes with consequent savings on office visits and transportation. The development of interactive computer programs and access to two-way multimedia telecommunications services can economically reduce costly face-to-face health consultations. Electronic telecommunications can enable both consumers and providers to access a broad spectrum of information resources that guide improved decision-making.

Population-based health needs are also advanced by universal access to networked information. In a July 1995 report of the U.S. Public Health Service titled, "Making a Powerful Connection: The Health of the Public and the National Information Infrastructure," the Public Health Data Policy Coordinating Committee argued that networked information could serve the health of the public through rapid communication regarding disease or environmental risk; assessment of community health problems and needs; provision of distance education regarding prevention to residents and public health workers; identification of community health resources to residents; and data collection for public health assessment and planning.

Similarly, research has confirmed the critical impact of the health of communities on individual health status making electronic access to community health information networks an essential component of our national health-care system.

Digital technologies that can enable a wide range of treatment modalities traditionally carried out in the hospitals or nursing homes can now be performed at home. Physicians can use stethoscopes, endoscopes, electrocardiography, radiographic and sonographic equipment, and the network can carry high quality diagnostic information electronically from patients to remote physicians.

The telecommunications technologies provide consumers with new informational tools to locate and identify information tailored to their particular health status. Telecommunications also increases the sources of information that consumers can turn to and share information with each other. The new technologies have the potential to provide consumers with access to multimedia information and communications in much more powerful, timely and effective formats. Education, training and

specific instructions for rehabilitative therapy or on the use of equipment in the home can be provided visually to patients and caregivers. Support groups can be facilitated through access to video communications, which can also enhance their effectiveness.

Delivery of interactive health-care information in multimedia formats greatly enhances the effectiveness and likelihood of use by individuals. Use of these systems has reduced patient trips to emergency rooms as well as office visits and telephone calls to physicians. For many consultative and rehabilitation cases, a two-way, on-line video consultation may be either the only acceptable treatment mode or may substantially enhance the effectiveness of the treatment.

There are barriers to exploiting technological advancements for the electronic delivery of health-care. Lack of universal access to advanced multimedia telecommunications systems resources and networks represents a significant barrier to maximizing the personal self-care and well-being of all residents. The current uneven fragmented deployment of advanced telecommunications networks capable of delivering these health-care resources and services to every household throughout the United States constitutes the most formidable barrier to universal access to electronically delivered health-care services.

Populations, such as the poor, the severely disabled, and the chronically ill and their caregivers stand to gain much from such access, which would provide health-care information, on-line advice from professionals, as well as diagnostic, consultative and mutual aid support. Low levels of computer ownership by low-income population segments point up the current imbalance of telecommunications resources although future development of more user friendly, less complex access devices may ease this imbalance to some extent. In addition, technological advances, such as home care telemedicine, could be more easily implemented through universal home access to enlarge essential access by individuals in their homes for preventive and consultative health-care services.

Most health information technology was designed for the medical professional and is not effectively available to the lay consumer. Moreover, consumers today require a much greater scope and range of community, social and wellness information to manage their health-care needs beyond that found in medical clinical records or in professional medical databases.

Communities have similar needs for a wide range of data capable of being aggregated and compared across communities in order to assess their health status.

Consumers must have access to professional medical information databases and medical assessment tools in formats adopted to their needs and concerns.

These barriers have served to limit universal access to comprehensive health-care information, restricting the consumer's ability to make decisions and practice self-care and to take the preventive steps on an individual and community basis that may be required.

A widespread assumption posits that health-care equals paid professional services. Rich, largely untapped health-care resources include the volunteer-run on-line support networks and information services, which share both scientific and practical experiential knowledge, as well as sophisticated interactive information and software to motivate and help modify personal lifestyle behaviors. These grassroots lay health information networks and software tools should be identified and supported, since they provide practical, culturally sensitive, and competent health support and communications.

Another significant barrier to the widespread development and use of health information databases is the fear that the privacy of individuals will not be protected and that the confidentiality of personally identifiable information about the health of individuals will be compromised.

Universal service would also serve to breach the widening gap between the "information poor" and the "information wealthy." With shortened hospital stays, and closing of many hospitals, disadvantaged citizens have access to fewer health-care resources. Universal access to monitoring and consultation services electronically, as well as to on-line health-care databases and decision-support services, promises to provide practical health information and more effective access to disadvantaged populations who are often at highest risk for health problems.

Affordability is a major barrier to universal access, often affecting the disadvantaged, those with disabilities, and the homebound most acutely. Universal life line and other services will be required to extend access to those who cannot pay full rates.

A final obstacle to universal access is the need for training of both users and providers in the use of the new technologies. Community centers, social service agencies and public libraries can provide needed orientation and public access to on-line health information systems for those who cannot afford them. Health-care providers can also receive continuing education training in their homes.



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April 23, 1997

Chairman Reed Hundt  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street N.W.  
Washington, DC

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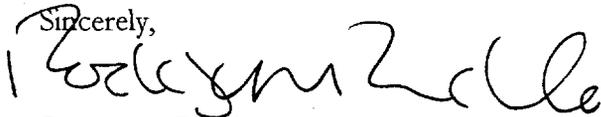
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Dear Chairman Hundt:

As you are aware, The Telecommunications Act of 1996 intends that consumers receive the benefits of choice, competitive prices and technological innovation. Such benefits are of particular importance to the community I live in and the students I serve. Tulsa, a community developed through the growth of the petroleum industry, has refocused its future on the economic potential of telecommunications-based businesses. Much of the job growth reported by our local Chamber of Commerce is tied to this economic sector.

Of equal importance is the role that telecommunications plays in education. The need for computers, Internet access and classrooms that provide facilities for interactive, distance learning is continually growing. Indeed, the ability to link students with learning opportunities has never been greater. In our community, Southwestern Bell has stepped forward to meet those needs, providing funding for Internet learning and for the development of high tech, interactive education in the classroom. Similar programs to encourage use of these advanced educational tools have also been funded by the company for primary and secondary schools in the area. These are commitments, I believe, which are consistent with those of the policy makers on the Federal Communications Commission.

Considering the increasing need for such services in both the public and private sector, I believe it entirely appropriate to encourage additional telecommunications choices for consumers. The community would benefit from additional long distance competition. Further, Southwestern Bell would be an appropriate addition to that field of competitors. Please support this company's effort to enter the long distance market. Their continued growth will assure benefits to consumers, businesses and students. Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,  
  
Rodger A. Randle  
President

CC: Commissioner James Quello  
Commissioner Susan Ness  
Commissioner Rachele Chong

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**NANUET PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

101 Church Street \* Nanuet, NY 10954  
Every Child A Winner!

MARK S. MCNEILL, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

PHILIP M. SIONS  
School Business Administrator  
Phone: (914) 627-9881  
Fax: (914) 623-1963

May 2, 1997

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MAY 5 1997

James Quello, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Quello:

I am the Superintendent of schools for the Nanuet Union Free School District. On behalf of the residents of Nanuet, the Board of Education and the entire school community, I would like to express our appreciation of your efforts to insure that school districts such as Nanuet will have affordable access to the Information Superhighway.

Implementation of the discount plan contained in the Telecommunications Act and promoted by the federal-State Joint board will guarantee that all schools - regardless of their financial condition - will be afforded the opportunity for Internet accessibility and distance-learning capabilities.

Our district needs substantial discounts for our telecommunications services in the upcoming 1997-98 school year. I strongly urge the FCC to support the Joint Board's discount plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

Mark S. McNeill  
Superintendent of Schools

MSM:cap

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

**TO:** FCC Commissioner Jim Quello  
 FCC Commissioner Rachelle Chong  
 FCC Commissioner Susan Ness

**FROM:** William A. Bell  
 Sr. Vice President/General Counsel, Florida Hospital Association

**SUBJ:** May 7 Vote on Telecommunications Universal Service Policy

The Florida Hospital Association, on behalf of its twenty-seven rural hospital members, urges your support of two issues which the FCC will vote on May 7 as part of the implementation of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

The Universal Service Policy should cover distance charges. Rural health care providers should have access to telecommunications services at about the same overall cost as that faced by urban health care providers. Often rural providers pay much more because of the great distances involved between them and urban connection sites. Distance charges are largely responsible for the considerable differences in telecommunications costs for rural and urban providers. The FCC should either subsidize distance charges or eliminate them in order for benefits of the Telecommunications Act for rural health care providers to be meaningful.

The Universal Service Policy should also support toll-free connections to the Internet. The Internet is a valuable tool for the provision of many rural health care providers, particularly in the area of public health. However, people in rural areas often must pay toll charges to reach the Internet Service Provider, while providers in urban areas do not. The FCC should support helping rural health care providers pay toll charges if they cannot connect to the Internet via a local call.

Thank you for your consideration of these issues.

WAB:lb

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Date 5/5/97 Number of Pages 1 + cover sheet  
 To: Ginger Clark, Eileen Duff, Janice Wise  
 Institution/Company: FCC  
 Fax Number: ( )  
 From: Bill Bell

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May 5, 1997

MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Rachelle B. Chong  
FCC Commissioner  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Commissioner Chong:

This note is to urge you to support the recommendations of the Federal-State Joint Board which calls for discounts ranging from 20 - 90% for libraries and schools. This discount includes all types of telecommunication services both for inside networks and internet services.

Sincerely,

*Linda Crowe*

Linda D. Crowe  
System Director

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# FAX

**Date** 5/5/97

**Number of pages including cover sheet** 2

**TO:** Jim Quello  
Rachelle Chong  
Susan Ness

**Phone**  
**Fax Phone**

**FROM:** Bud Danehy  
Greater Rochester Health System  
1040 University Ave.  
Rochester, NY 14607.

**Phone** 716-756-4237  
**Fax** 716-756-4287  
**Phone**

**CC:**

**REMARKS:**  Urgent  For your review  Reply ASAP  Please Comment

cc 96-45

**GREATER ROCHESTER  
HEALTH SYSTEM**

TO:.....

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Elimination of distance charges is important to the rural communities served by health care providers. The expansion of telemedicine to the rural communities will be restricted because of high communication costs. Access to quality care will be greatly enhanced by providing comparable telehealth communications costs to the rural health care provider. Access to quality professionals and other resources is important to individuals in rural communities.

Not all health care providers have access to a toll free Internet Service Provider. Eligible providers should be able to receive assistance to help pay for toll charge's if they cannot connect by way of a local call

LTD

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MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

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pls for to the 3  
Commissioners

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96-45-040

**ARIN Regional Educational Service Agency**  
Route 422 East, P.O. Box 175  
Shelocta, PA 15774-0175  
FAX • 412/463-5315

**Serving Your Schools in  
Armstrong and Indiana Counties**

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**FAX Cover Sheet**

Date: May 5, 1997

This transmission consists of 2 pages (including this cover sheet) and is sent to  
FAX Number 202-418-2820

To: The Honorable Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner  
Federal Communications Commission

From: Dr. Thomas P. Carey, Executive Director  
ARIN IU 28

Message: \_\_\_\_\_  
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**STONEHILL**  
COLLEGE

May 2, 1997

Rachelle B. Chong, Commissioner  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

**Ex Parte Communications in CC Docket No. 96-262**

Dear Ms. Chong:

I am writing in regards to the proposed increase to the monthly Subscriber Line Charge and the new Pre-subscribed Line Charge. I would like to voice my opposition to this proposal.

The College is attempting to keep tuition fees reasonable, and each year more and more of our annual budget is set aside for financial aid. These increases will impact our budget and our ability to give as much financial aid as possible. At a time when more and more students are having trouble affording higher education, anything that takes away from the College's ability to give financial aid is a major concern.

I hope you will reconsider the proposed changes due to their potential impact on students seeking higher education.

Very truly yours,

  
Virginia Murphy  
Telecommunications Coordinator

cc: Brian Moir, Esq.  
Jeri Semer, Executive Director, ACUTA

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# Santa Maria-Bonita School District

96-45



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Gail M. Tissier, Ed.D.  
Superintendent

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SOUZA STUDENT SUPPORT CENTER  
708 South Miller Street  
Santa Maria, CA 93454-6221  
(805) 928-1783, Ext. 235

May 1, 1997

MAY 5 1997

SENT VIA FACSIMILE & U. S. MAIL

Mr. James Quello, Commissioner  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M St., NW, Rm. 802  
Washington DC 20554

Dear Mr. Quello:

The Santa Maria-Bonita School District, located on the Central Coast of California, is involved in implementing its long-range technology plan. Because most of our schools are over 30 years old, each needs to be rewired to meet the demands of technology. We have gone to bid for the wiring of our classrooms and each time the cost has been prohibitive.

It is our understanding that on May 8, 1997, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) will vote on the final rules for dispersing as much as \$2.25 billion in telecommunications discounts for schools and libraries. This truly is a miracle! Our schools drastically need this support to bring educational technology to our children to meet the demands of the 21st Century.

Our school board set aside some money, however, it is not enough to bring the infrastructure of educational technology to our students' classrooms. Also, if we use this money to wire our schools then there will be no money left to purchase the hardware and software necessary to integrate our curriculum with the wonderful software support systems that presently exist for children.

The Santa Maria-Bonita School District strongly encourages the FCC to approve the recommendations of the Federal-State Joint Board for Universal Service for implementation of the discount plan to meet the requirements of the Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Our school district has a very high concentration of economically disadvantaged students. These students need all the help and support that can be provided to assist them in reaching high academic standards. By approving the Federal-State Joint Board for Universal Service recommendations for implementation of the discount plan, you will greatly help bring about the academic success of our students.

Our students will truly be engaged in a global world of communications broadening their understanding of the world in which they live. Please make this miracle become a reality for our students by voting to approve the Federal-State Joint Board for Universal Service recommendations.

Sincerely,

*Gail M. Tissier*  
GAIL M. TISSIER, Ed.D.  
SUPERINTENDENT

- c
- SMBSD Board of Education
- The Honorable Barbara Boxer
- The Honorable Walter Capps
- The Honorable Diane Feinstein
- State Superintendent Delaine Eastin
- California Public Utilities Commission

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*Student Success Is Our Business*

**LOWCOUNTRY PEDIATRICS, P.A.** EX PARTE OR LATE FILED  
**Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine**  
964 Ribaut Road, Suite 1  
Beaufort, SC 29902  
(803) 524-5437

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Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

April 22, 1997

The Honorable Reed Hundt  
Chairman  
Federal Communication Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Chairman Hundt,

As a school board member and an advocate for children in Beaufort, S.C., I would like to voice my support for the Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan currently being presented to your commission.

The benefit of this plan to our educational system, to our individual schools, and most importantly to our students is certainly apparent. This plan is a solid investment in the future of our children and, therefore, our society.

Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joseph Floyd

JF\bd

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Vacaville Unified School District

751 School Street • Vacaville, California 95688-3987

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MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, D.C.

- Board of Education
- Larry R. Mazzuca  
President
- Katherine Brannon  
Vice President
- Sarah E. Chapman  
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- Kathleen M. Collier
- Nicholas D. Esplin
- Bill Hausler
- Patricia M. (Bradani) Mylott
- Richard E. Jackson  
Superintendent &  
Board Secretary

April 18, 1997

Mr. Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D. C. 20554

RE: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Mr. Hundt:

I am writing to you in regard to the federal "E-RATE" Telecommunications Discount Program. I am a locally elected School Board Member from the Vacaville Unified School District and I would like to express my strong support for this Program and the proposed regulations governing its implementation.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the Federal-State Joint Board Discount Plan will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have access to the Internet and the ability to provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of schools across the Country and, more importantly, the plan will bring telecommunications services directly to the classrooms where they can have the greatest impact on students. It is important to remember that each element of this plan is vital to the overall success of the Discount Program. Therefore, the inclusion of discounts for internal classroom connections should not be eliminated, nor should the size of the Universal Service Fund be reduced. As I am sure you are aware, this program is essential for preparing our students to enter the workforce of tomorrow.

The E-Rate Telecommunications Discount Program is desperately overdue and our students need these discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge you and the other FCC Commissioners to fully support the recommendations of the Joint Board and approve the proposed final regulations regarding the Discount Plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Katherine Brannon, Vice President  
Board of Education  
Vacaville Unified School District

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# Vacaville Unified School District

751 School Street • Vacaville, California 95688-3987



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## Board of Education

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President

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Bill Hausler

Patricia M. (Bradani) Mylott

Richard E. Jackson  
Superintendent &  
Board Secretary

April 18, 1997

Mr. Reed Hundt, Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, NW, Room 814  
Washington, D. C. 20554

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Dear Mr. Hundt:

I am writing to you in regard to the federal "E-RATE" Telecommunications Discount Program. I am a locally elected School Board Member from the Vacaville Unified School District and I would like to express my strong support for this Program and the proposed regulations governing its implementation.

The Telecommunications Act of 1996, and the Federal-State Joint Board Discount Plan will guarantee that even the poorest schools will have access to the Internet and the ability to provide distance-learning opportunities. The \$2.25 billion a year will address the needs of schools across the Country and, more importantly, the plan will bring telecommunications services directly to the classrooms where they can have the greatest impact on students. It is important to remember that each element of this plan is vital to the overall success of the Discount Program. Therefore, the inclusion of discounts for internal classroom connections should not be eliminated, nor should the size of the Universal Service Fund be reduced. As I am sure you are aware, this program is essential for preparing our students to enter the workforce of tomorrow.

The E-Rate Telecommunications Discount Program is desperately overdue and our students need these discounts for telecommunications services this year. I urge you and the other FCC Commissioners to fully support the recommendations of the Joint Board and approve the proposed final regulations regarding the Discount Plan for universal service for schools and libraries.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicholas Esplin". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over the typed name.

Nicholas Esplin  
Board of Education  
Vacaville Unified School District

NE:lm

**LOWCOUNTRY PEDIATRICS, P.A.**  
**Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine**  
964 Ribaut Road, Suite 1  
Beaufort, SC 29902  
(803) 524-5437

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REC'D  
MAY 2 2 53 PM '97

JAMES QU...  
...

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

April 22, 1997

The Honorable James Quello  
Commissioner  
Federal Communication Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W., Room 814  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RECEIVED

MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Re: CC Docket No. 96-45

Dear Commissioner Quello,

As a school board member and an advocate for children in Beaufort, S.C., I would like to voice my support for the Telecommunications Act and the Federal-State Joint Board discount plan currently being presented to your commission.

The benefit of this plan to our educational system, to our individual schools, and most importantly to our students is certainly apparent. This plan is a solid investment in the future of our children and, therefore, our society.

Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joseph Floyd

JF/bd

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Francis Rushton, M.D. • Joseph Floyd, M.D. • Lawrence Coleman, M.D. • Karen Keane, D.O.

EX PARTE OR LATE FILED

96-45



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RECEIVED

MAY 5 1997

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of Secretary

Healthcare You Can Trust

May 5, 1997

Commissioner Susan Ness  
Via Facsimile

Dear Commissioner Ness:

As a health care provider serving rural communities, we request your support of universal service for Tele communications that will make Tele medicine affordable. The FCC must make rates comparable between urban and rural areas. In this way we can lessen the difference between the levels of services available in urban areas and those in rural areas.

The availability of health care resources and access to medical professionals should not be hindered by geographic distances. By lowering or even subsidizing health related Tele communications costs, the availability of Tele medicine will improve the quality of care and reduce the costs of such care in rural areas.

Thank you for your support and assistance.

Sincerely,

John P. Galati  
President & C.E.O.

JPG/pd

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Finger Lakes  
Community Cancer Center  
Six Coulter Road  
Clifton Springs, New York  
14432-1189

Finger Lakes  
Breast Care  
4 Coulter Road  
Clifton Springs, New York  
14432

Canal Park  
Family Medicine  
555 West Main Street  
Palmyra, New York  
14427

Lyons Diagnostic &  
Treatment Center  
122 Broad Street  
Lyons, New York  
14490-1012

Seneca Falls  
Health Center  
Two Fall Street  
Seneca Falls, New York  
13148-1420

Addictions  
Recovery Center  
11 North Street  
Canandaigua, New York  
14424-1032

96-45

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**P. O. Box 791  
400 East Chestnut St.  
Phone (405) 688-3363  
Fax (405) 688-2246  
Al Allee, CEO**

*Harmon Memorial Hospital*

---

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May 5, 1997

Janice Wise

Dear Janice:

We are writing to urge your support to provide long distance subsidies to make telemedicine cost more equitable in the rural areas. We are a small rural hospital in southwest Oklahoma located 90 miles from the nearest tertiary medical facility. The cost of long distance puts us in the position of having to evaluate whether or not we can afford telemedicine services in our community. Your support for subsidizing these long distance charges would be very much appreciated.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,



Al Allee, CEO

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96-45

**Madison Medical Center**

P.O. Box 431  
100 South Wood at College  
Fredericktown, Missouri 63645  
573-783-3341  
Fax 573-783-1096

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May 5, 1997

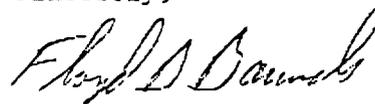
Commissioner Susan Ness  
Fax: (202) 418-2100

Dear Ms. Ness:

Approximately four years ago, Madison Medical Center attempted a tele-radiology program with Missouri Baptist Medical Center in St. Louis, Missouri; however, due to the extreme cost of the necessary phone lines, MMC was unable to afford the tele-radiology program. We would appreciate the opportunity to participate in tele-medicine programs if they were more affordable. I am in full support of reduced rates so that rural communities would have better access to care from larger institutions.

If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Floyd D. Bounds  
Administrator

FDB:mlb

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96-45

**From:** Jenny Underwood <jennyu@evergreen.com>  
**To:** A7.A7(RHUNDT)  
**Date:** 5/5/97 3:42pm

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

Please do not vote for the Universal Service Plan. It unfairly taxes Internet Service Providers who depend on local business phone lines for their business. It should be applied to "all" businesses and "all" consumers to be fair. There are other alternatives to be studied. While we have willingly provided libraries and schools services through discounts, the added costs of dialup lines would hurt the very businesses that have allowed the Internet to grow at accelerated rates.

**CC:** A7.A7(JQUELLO, SNESS, RCHONG)

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