

The Honorable Delaine Eastin
25th State Superintendent of Public Instruction
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November 2, 2015

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Ajit Pai
Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: Broadband Lifeline Rate
Lifeline and Link Up Reform and Modernization, WC Docket No. 11-42
Telecommunications Carriers Eligible for Universal Service Support, WC Docket No. 09-197
Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner Pai,
Commissioner Rosenworcel, and Commissioner O'Rielly:

Access to the internet is vital to our children's educational achievement and to our nation's prosperity. Please do not leave access to this new information highway to chance, especially for our poorest children. As an educator, I respectfully urge the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to empower all Americans with high-speed Internet access through an affordable Broadband Lifeline Program for all low-income households.

I know you are well aware of the importance of technology today to empower low-income residents in poor neighborhoods. More than 20% of all California households remain offline and in a Digital Age are being left behind at an accelerating pace—increasingly being disenfranchised from the democracy itself because so much government information and many public services are online. The Digital Divide persists for disadvantaged communities with large percentages of households not connected at home—35% of low-income households (under \$20,000 annual income); 30% of Latino families (37% for Spanish-speaking households); and 41% of people with disabilities. Participation in daily life requires broadband access at home—job and college applications, school homework, healthcare coverage, workforce training, and education scholarships.

I also know from first-hand experience that it takes a “trusted messenger” to reach offline households. Research shows that there are 3 primary barriers to broadband adoption: (1) Cost; (2) Relevance; and (3) Digital Literacy. Thus, an effective Broadband Lifeline Program must provide dedicated funding for community-based organizations (CBOs), schools and libraries to assist providers with in-language and in-culture outreach, digital literacy training, and sign-ups for subscriptions to successfully close the Digital Divide. And, there must be transparency and accountability to achieve tangible results.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to design a successful Broadband Lifeline Program by taking the following actions:

- Establish an affordable high-speed Internet service plan for all low-income households offered by and through all broadband providers (in the \$10/month range) with sufficient speeds and a wireless modem for compatibility with school-issued devices. A Broadband Lifeline Program should augment Telephone Lifeline and not force consumers to choose between the two necessary technologies and programs.
- Capitalize an independent fund to support community-based organizations (CBOs), schools and libraries (as “trusted messengers”) through performance-based grants to assist in enrolling eligible low-income households and participate in true public-private partnerships.
- Appoint an oversight advisory body to ensure transparency and accountability with a broad base of stakeholders and community leaders knowledgeable about broadband adoption.

Please join *Internet For All Now* toward a workable Broadband Lifeline Program, “to create a high-performance America—a more productive, creative, efficient America in which affordable broadband is available everywhere and everyone has the means and skills to use valuable broadband applications.” While California is the home of the Silicon Valley and home to some of the most important digital companies on the planet, all our children deserve affordable access. Remember during the darkest days of the Great Depression another generation set out to give the entire nation access to electricity. Now it is our time to do important work for the next generation. Please take vital steps for our future—the internet should be accessible to all.

Sincerely,



Delaine Eastin
Former California Superintendent of Public Instruction