

Stephen Hager
2989 N Blackhawk Trl
Mokenca, IL 60954-3174

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Dear Kevin Martin,

The Internet has become an integral part of American life and will only become more important in the future. We rely on Internet access to learn, work, play and communicate on issues of importance in our communities.

That is why all Americans - regardless of income, education or location - should have access to Internet service that's fast, free and family-friendly.

Our nation's high-speed Internet system should be safe for children to use without the risk of encountering indecent material. It should be made available to every student, whether they are enrolled in a rich or poor school district, so that everyone has the tools needed to compete for jobs and to prepare for higher education. Our inner-cities are currently underserved when it comes to high-speed internet access and nations with greater access to the Internet have been shown to perform better in educational settings. Unfortunately, current prices for broadband in the United States are too high and far too many households have limited or no connectivity. No American should be left behind because existing broadband options are not affordable or unavailable. We must close the gap between Americans who do not have access to high-speed Internet because of high costs and those who currently have broadband access.

Implementation of a proposal now before the FCC to provide fast, free, and family-friendly universal broadband access program, like that supported by the Coalition for Free Broadband Now, is a necessary step towards protecting our children online while at the same time ensuring that all Americans, regardless of where they live and what their economic circumstance are, have access to high-speed Internet.

This solution would help close the gap between African-American, Latino and other minority communities that currently have less access to high-speed Internet and those communities that already have access. Offering free broadband for all Americans will level the playing field by providing the best Internet service to underserved communities and helping students enrolled in inner-city, rural and underserved schools currently without high-speed internet access stay competitive with their counterparts around the globe.

Sincerely,

Stephen Hager

CC: Secretary Jackson
Michael Copps
Jonathan Adelstein
Deborah Taylor Tate
Robert McDowell
Representative Weller
Senator Durbin
Senator Obama