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House of Representatives

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April 19, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: **Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up**
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As members of the Texas State Legislature and the House Democratic Caucus, we are writing to stress the importance and positive impact of the Universal Service Fund and the Lifeline Assistance Program on the low-income residents of Texas.

The Texas unemployment rate stands at 8.3% statewide, and the Lifeline Assistance Program currently offers over 836,000 Texas residents who meet federal poverty guidelines and participate in assistance programs like Medicaid and food stamps discounted landline and wireless phone services.

These services allow every qualified household to have access to a phone in which to keep in contact with prospective employers, emergency services, and family. Because the Lifeline Assistance Program is not funded by taxpayer dollars but by a percentage of the long-distance service revenue of telecommunication companies, the program provides the state of Texas a cost-effective tool to fight unemployment.

We understand that the Commission will be issuing a ruling concerning the restructuring of the Universal Service and the Lifeline Assistance Program very soon.

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We urge the Commission to implement measures that ensure the continuation of these vital services to rural and low-income households.

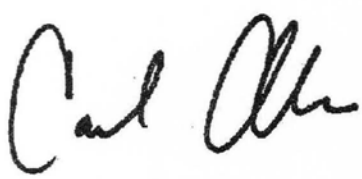
Sincerely,

Representative Pete Gallego
District 74

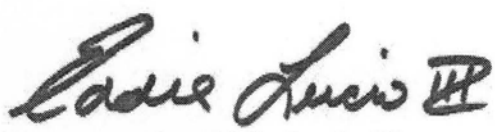
Representative Chente Quintanilla
District 75

Representative Armando Walle
District 140

Representative Joe Farias
District 11



Representative Carol Alvarado
District 145



Representative Eddie Lucio III
District 38

Cc: Commissioner Michael J. Copps: Michael.Copps@fcc.gov
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