

SUPPORT THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM EXTENSION ACT OF 2024

ACTION NEEDED:

Urge your Members of Congress to support the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act of 2024 (S. 3565 and H.R. 6929) to provide \$7 billion in funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and keep the program operational throughout the remainder of 2024. Introduced by Sens. J.D. Vance (R-Ohio) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Reps. Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.), this legislation would extend funding for the ACP to avoid a lapse of the program which would impact over 22 million enrolled households. The FCC has announced that barring additional funding from Congress, it will plan to stop accepting new ACP enrollments after February 7, 2024, and the program will de-enroll all households from the ACP at the end of April 2024.

BACKGROUND:

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is a benefit program that helps ensure households can afford reliable broadband services for work, school, healthcare and much more. The ACP was enacted by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in November of 2021 as an extension of the Emergency Broadband Benefit, which provided a monthly benefit to eligible households to receive access to broadband during the first 18 months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ACP provides a discount of up to \$30 per month towards internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month to households on qualifying Tribal lands or high-cost areas as defined in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Eligible households can also receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a connectivity device, such as a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet, from participating providers if they contribute more than \$10 and less than \$50 towards the purchase price.

A household is eligible for the ACP if the household income is at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. A household can also be eligible if it meets at least one of the following criteria: received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; meets the eligibility criteria for

THE ACP CURRENTLY CONNECT 22 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS ACROSS THE U.S. TO HIGH-SPEED, RELIABLE INTERNET ACCESS

COUNTIES PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ENSURING ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS ARE ABLE TO ACCESS AND ENROLL IN THIS PROGRAM

HOWEVER, THE ACP IS PROJECTED TO RUN OUT OF FUNDING BY APRIL 2024. WITHOUT ADDITIONAL FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS, 22 MILLION HOUSEHOLDS ARE AT RISK OF BEING DISCONNECTED FROM HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICES

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a participating provider's existing low-income internet program; or participates in any one of the following:

- Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program, including at U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Community Eligibility Provisions schools;
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- Medicaid
- Federal Housing Assistance programs;
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI);
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program
- Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits;
- Lifeline Program

The ACP has over 22 million enrolled households to date, and the ACP has a one-time appropriation of \$14.2 billion from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Due to the continued rise of enrollment to the ACP, and the program's single funding source, it is estimated that the ACP will exhaust all funding at the end of April 2024. Absent additional funding from Congress before that date, the ACP will discontinue, and all 22 million households will be de-enrolled from the program.

KEY TALKING POINTS:

- The ACP is a key tool for closing the digital divide, as Americans require a high-speed broadband connection to participate in modern society. The ACP provides critical support to households who would otherwise be unable to afford a subscription that supports reliable high-speed internet connectivity.
- The ACP has become an essential resource for counties to promote high-speed internet services to underserved communities that lack adoption to broadband services. By discontinuing the ACP, Congress is at risk of stalling or backsliding on progress made towards providing high-speed internet access to all Americans.

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