



June 17, 2024

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
Chair
Subcommittee on Communications, Media,
and Broadband
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Chair Luján,

[The National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#) (NDIA) respectfully submits this statement of support for \$7 billion in funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in the Spectrum and National Security Act of 2024. The [National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#) advances digital equity by supporting community programs and equipping policymakers to act. We have over 1,700 affiliates in all 50 states, five territories, the District of Columbia, and in Tribal communities. Our affiliates are community-based organizations, nonprofits, local and state governments, and many other organizations that support individuals using technology to live, learn, work, and thrive.

As long-time advocates of affordable internet, we strongly urge you to include funding for the now-lapsed ACP to reinstate the program while a long-term funding solution is developed. While the program lapsed on May 31st, 2024, a short-term funding allocation for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) would ensure that 23+ million American households can get and stay online through the end of 2024.

You can see that real-world impact [in this video](#), where – Walter a digital navigator with an NDIA affiliate – and Pete, a U.S. veteran share how the program enabled Pete and other veterans in rural and urban areas to access the VA and other veteran benefits. Many of our affiliates are like Walter – they spread awareness about ACP and provided step-by-step enrollment support for community members.

As you consider funding priorities for the Spectrum and National Security Act, please include funding for the ACP. Affordable internet access is integral to America's economic growth, workforce development, and innovation.¹ By including the use of spectrum auction

¹ See Blair Levin, "Washington May Be About to Take a Giant Step Backward In Closing the Digital Divide" (Blog), March 13, 2023 <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/washington-may-be-about-to-take-a-giant-step-backward-in-closing-the-digital-divide/> See also Common Sense Media et. al. "Looking Back, Looking Forward: What it will take to permanently close the digital divide (San Francisco, Common Sense Media 2021) https://www.common Sense Media.org/sites/default/files/research/report/final_-_what_it_will_take_to_perm

proceeds to fund the ACP in your bill, you are ensuring that millions of Americans can stay connected.

NDIA thanks you for your strong support for affordable internet service. We look forward to continuing to work with you and all of Congress to identify a long-term funding solution to continue this important program. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me or Amy Huffman at amy@digitalinclusion.org or (919) 928-6959.

Thank you for your time and leadership. Your support is vital to creating connected communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "ASiefert". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Angela Siefert

[anently close the k-12 digital divide vfeb3.pdf](#) . This report finds that academic gaps associated with the digital divide can lead to \$33 billion in annual GDP loss.