

December 1, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Broadband Mapping and Community Anchor Institutions

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition and the parties listed below write in support of full funding for the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) broadband mapping efforts but only if the Commission includes community anchor institutions in the national broadband map. Anchor institutions include schools, libraries, healthcare providers, higher education institutions, houses of worship, community centers and other public community-based organizations. Congressional language regarding anchor institutions is necessary because the FCC has not specifically proposed to include anchor institutions in its mapping efforts.

We agree with many other parties that the U.S. should gather and display more accurate and more granular broadband information. As others have pointed out, broadband maps are necessary to determine how federal, state and local funding should be directed to areas, communities and locations that currently lack adequate broadband.

Having said that, there are several other equally important reasons for developing more accurate and granular broadband maps. Broadband maps are also important for assessing our economic competitiveness, public safety, education and telehealth services. To answer these questions, we need to know not just whether broadband is available; we need to know about the quality and type of broadband capacity that has been deployed across the country. In other words, measuring broadband should not be a binary analysis; broadband maps must also measure and display the specific locations served, the bandwidth, capacity, mobility, latency and price. As the Benton Institute described in a recent [report](#), we should be focused on ensuring that "high-performance" broadband is ubiquitous and affordable for all.

For example, the [National Broadband Plan Goal #4](#) calls for anchor institutions to have gigabit capacity by the year 2020. We have not met this goal. Even worse, we do not even know how far from this goal we are because we have not collected the information to evaluate the current state of broadband for

anchor institutions. The SHLB Coalition previously issued [a report](#) estimating that it would cost between \$13 billion to \$19 billion to connect all the remaining anchor institutions to fiber. But this report was only an estimate because the data to make a more definitive conclusion is not available.

The legislative history supporting the Broadband DATA Act that Congress enacted earlier this year includes language in the House Energy and Commerce Committee report and a statement on the Senate floor by Senator Ed Markey, one of the co-sponsors of the legislation, asking the FCC to include anchor institutions in the broadband maps. Unfortunately, the most recent [proposal](#) from the FCC (released in July 2020) proposes to collect information about residential and business customers but not anchor institutions.

High-quality broadband is especially important for anchor institutions, which rely on connectivity to provide their communities with essential services, such as remote learning, virtual doctor visits, and web-based librarian assistance. The COVID-19 pandemic has only heightened this need. As Congress considers providing funding to the FCC to gather broadband location information and publish broadband maps, we urge you to add language to ensure that broadband for community anchor institutions is included.

Sincerely,



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