



April 26, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

As Congress begins to accelerate its work on both supplemental funding for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 and regular appropriations for FY 2025, we write on behalf of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Committee on Communications, USCCB Committee on Catholic Education, the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA) and Catholic Charities USA, to bring to your attention an urgent need for the continuation of funding for the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). We urge Congress to move swiftly to secure continued funding for this important program, by enacting [H.R. 6929/S. 3565](#), the "Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act of 2024", legislation introduced in the House and Senate by a bipartisan group of lawmakers, and by providing funding through the regular or supplemental appropriations processes.

As you know, ACP has provided access to affordable high-speed internet connections for more than 23 million households. Unfortunately, in the absence of congressional action, ACP will end in the coming weeks without additional financial support, resulting in a rise in internet bills for one out of every six homes in the U.S.; an eventuality that will making connectivity unaffordable for many.

Broadband connectivity in our homes is not a luxury; rather, it has become a necessity to navigate life in the United States. Students need high-speed connectivity in their homes so they can complete work assignments, participate in virtual classrooms, and enhance their learning. Patients, particularly those in rural communities, increasingly rely on broadband internet so that they can connect with their doctors or mental health therapists through telehealth consultations or to review their health records. Many elderly, disabled, and isolated parishioners need broadband access so they can worship remotely. And without access to broadband services at home, many could lose their ability to fill out and submit job applications, which increasingly rely on virtual submissions. As Pope Francis stated in his 2014 Message for World Communications Day, "The internet... offers immense possibilities for encounter and solidarity. This is something truly good, a gift from God."

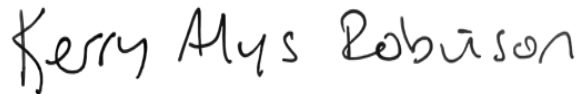
At the end of 2023, the FCC conducted a survey of ACP recipients late last year and found that 80 percent of those responding indicated that the reason they had inconsistent or no internet service prior to the ACP was because it was unaffordable to them. More than 75 percent indicated that losing the ACP would disrupt their service, up to and including dropping internet service altogether. In addition, more than half of those households receiving ACP support are headed by someone 50 years and older. The survey results show that, unless Congress acts to extend funding for ACP, millions of households throughout the United States could lose their ability to access job opportunities, education, healthcare services, and worship services.

Once again, we urge you to move swiftly to continue funding for this important program.

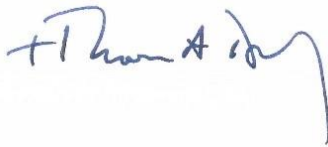
Thank you for your consideration,



Most Rev. Robert P. Reed
Auxiliary Bishop of Boston
Chairman, Committee on Communications



Ms. Kerry Alys Robinson
President & CEO
Catholic Charities USA



Most Rev. Thomas Daly
Bishop of Spokane,
Chairman USCCB Committee on Catholic
Education



Sister Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO
Catholic Health Association
of the United States