

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 8, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

We are grateful for your swift and steadfast leadership in securing the well-being and economic health of our nation. As you craft the next coronavirus relief package, we request the inclusion of the Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020, H.R. 6563. The Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020 will ensure schools and libraries, including tribal schools and libraries can purchase Wi-Fi hotspots, modems, routers, and internet-enabled devices to provide internet connectivity to students during this unprecedented time.

As you know, to slow the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, schools across the nation have closed—many for the remainder of the school year. This has impacted over 55 million students across 124,000 U.S. public and private schools.¹ For millions of students without internet access at home, they face an uncertain educational future that could have long-term consequences for their overall success.

Even before the outbreak of COVID-19, however, the ‘homework gap,’ had proven to be a pernicious problem. According to Pew Research, 15 percent of households with school aged children did not have internet access based on 2015 Census data, and some studies have

¹ “Map: Coronavirus and School Closures,” Education Week, March 6, 2020,
<https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures.html>

estimated that as many as 12 million students may lack internet access at home.² These trends, unfortunately, are even more pronounced for minorities and low-income households.³ Before the pandemic hit, about 7 in 10 teachers assigned homework that required internet access; today, schools across the country have moved learning entirely online, including class meetings, explanations of new content, virtual field trips, homework, and learning exercises. Students without internet service will fall further behind as students with internet service at home can continue advancing in their studies. Whether they live in urban centers, suburbs, or exurbs, or small communities in rural America, all students require internet connectivity to succeed during this pandemic.

We were grateful to see a provision in the House Democrats' Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act, that would have provided \$2 billion in funding to provide students with Wi-Fi hotspots and internet-enabled devices for the duration of this health crisis. Unfortunately, this provision was not included in the Senate's Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. We must correct this omission, which is why we strongly urge the inclusion of the Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020 in the next package. This legislation would empower the Federal Communications Commission to disburse \$2 billion from a special Emergency Connectivity Fund to schools and libraries, including tribal schools and libraries.

As the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic continues and millions of Americans are asked to stay home for the sake of everyone's health, we must ensure our most vulnerable constituents—including students—are not left behind. We thank you for your leadership and attention to this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress

/s/ Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

/s/ Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

/s/ Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

/s/ Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

/s/ Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

/s/ Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

/s/ Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

/s/ Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress

/s/ Susan Wild
Member of Congress

² Kim Hart, "The Homework Divide: 12 million schoolchildren lack internet," Axios, December 1, 2018, <https://www.axios.com/the-homework-gap-kids-without-home-broadband-access-3ad5909f-e2fb-4208-b4d0-574c45ff4fe7.html>

³ Brooke Auxier & Monica Anderson, "As schools close due to the coronavirus, some U.S. students face a digital 'homework gap'," Pew Research Center, March 16, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/03/16/as-schools-close-due-to-the-coronavirus-some-u-s-students-face-a-digital-homework-gap/>

/s/ TJ Cox
Member of Congress

/s/ Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

/s/ Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

/s/ Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

/s/ Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

/s/ Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress

/s/ Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

/s/ Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

/s/ Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

/s/ Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

/s/ José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

/s/ Steven Horsford
Member of Congress

/s/ Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Costa
Member of Congress

/s/ Donna E. Shalala
Member of Congress

/s/ Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

/s/ Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress

/s/ Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

/s/ Albio Sires
Member of Congress

/s/ Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

/s/ Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Levin
Member of Congress

/s/ Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

/s/ Jim Himes
Member of Congress

/s/ Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

/s/ Thomas R. Suozzi
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/s/ Adriano Espaillat
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/s/ Susie Lee
Member of Congress

/s/ Deb Haaland
Member of Congress

/s/ Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

/s/ Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

/s/ Darren Soto
Member of Congress

/s/ Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

/s/ Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

/s/ Cindy Axne
Member of Congress

/s/ Lori Trahan
Member of Congress

/s/ David Trone
Member of Congress

/s/ Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

/s/ Adam Smith
Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

/s/ Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

/s/ C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

/s/ Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

/s/ Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

/s/ Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

/s/ Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

/s/ Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress

/s/ Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

/s/ John B. Larson
Member of Congress

/s/ Denny Heck
Member of Congress

/s/ Michael F.Q. San Nicolas
Member of Congress

/s/ Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

/s/ Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

/s/ Ed Case
Member of Congress

/s/ Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

/s/ Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

/s/ Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

/s/ Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

/s/ Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress

/s/ Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

/s/ Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

/s/ A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

/s/ André Carson
Member of Congress

/s/ James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

/s/ Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

/s/ Josh Harder
Member of Congress

/s/ Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

/s/ Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress

/s/ Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

/s/ Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

/s/ Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

/s/ Peter Welch
Member of Congress

/s/ David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

/s/ John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

/s/ Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

/s/ Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

/s/ Joyce Beatty
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/s/ Doris Matsui
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/s/ Robin L. Kelly
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/s/ G. K. Butterfield
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/s/ John Yarmuth
Member of Congress

/s/ Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

/s/ Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

/s/ Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress

/s/ Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

/s/ Marc Veasey
Member of Congress

/s/ Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

/s/ Abby Finkenauer
Member of Congress