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7TH DISTRICT, MISSOURI

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2507

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July 10, 2014

The Honorable Tom Wheeler
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

Tomorrow the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is scheduled to vote on a proposal which would make significant changes to the E-Rate program; this program is designed to help schools and libraries connect to the Internet and enhance our educational system, which I believe is an excellent goal.

The proposal from what I have seen promises over \$5 billion for Wi-Fi but doesn't identify where the money will come from to fund this new program. While the source of funding is a concern, a larger concern to my school districts and constituents in Southwest Missouri is how the funding would be distributed under the proposal should the FCC approve it. The proposed changes threaten the sustainability of E-rate program and shift the focus away from the program's neediest entities; the proposal also undermines the ability of the program to ensure Priority One services. These changes include a shift to per-pupil funding, calculating poverty at the district and not school level, consideration of pilot projects and elimination of legacy services, including phone and web hosting, among others. These changes would severely disadvantage smaller, rural schools such as the ones in my district.

I understand the need to serve large urban school districts with significant needs, however the proposed shift is not an effective means of getting the Internet-era resources to schools and libraries with the greatest needs. I respectfully request the Commission to look more closely at this proposal before moving forward with a vote.

Sincerely,



Billy Long
Member of Congress

BHL:sbs