

May 4, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Co-Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
560 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens and Co-Chairman Inouye:

We are writing to express our appreciation for the Commerce Committee's April 11, 2005, hearing on S. 241, legislation that would permanently exempt universal service funds from the Anti-deficiency Act (ADA). The hearing left no doubt about this issue's importance and the need for swift passage of this legislation. Your leadership on this matter has been and will continue to be crucial in avoiding the severely adverse effects that result from the application of the ADA to these programs. Without such an exemption, millions of people will undoubtedly experience service disruptions and significant increases in the universal service contribution factor.

Our organizations respectfully urge you to schedule S. 241 for action by the Commerce Committee as soon as possible. As principal proponents of the temporary exemption legislation in the prior Congress, you are aware that the exemption expires at the end of this calendar year. Given the potential for disruption to all universal service programs, it is vital for the Commerce Committee to address this issue as soon as possible, so that the uncertainty that currently hangs over these programs can be permanently eliminated. Early approval by your Committee will send the needed signal to the rest of Congress about the importance of passing this critically important legislation.

Thank you again for your effective leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you and the rest of your Committee to enact S. 241 expeditiously and to resolve this issue permanently.

Sincerely,

Alcatel
Alliance for Public Technology
American Association of School Administrators
American Library Association
American Telemedicine Association

Apple
Association of Educational Service Agencies
Cisco Systems
Consortium for School Networking
Council of Chief State School Officers
Council of the Great City Schools
Discovery Communications, Inc.
General Communication Inc.
Independent Telephone and Telecommunications Alliance
International Society for Technology in Education
Latino Education Project, Inc.
National Association of Independent Schools
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
National Association of State Boards of Education
National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates
National Education Association
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Indian Telecommunications Institute
National PTA
National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition
National Rural Health Association
National School Boards Association
National Telecommunications Cooperative Association
Organization for the Promotion and Advancement of Small Telecommunications Companies
Software & Information Industry Association
State E-Rate Coordinators Alliance
Telecommunications Industry Association
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Western Telecommunications Alliance
Western Wireless