

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2012

0521

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As Members of Congress who strongly support the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) efforts to reform and strengthen the Universal Service Fund's Lifeline program, we write to express our view regarding the specific rulemaking actions approved on January 31, 2012. Specifically, we are concerned with the relatively short timeframe that the FCC has imposed for the implementation of "full certification", the requirement that consumers produce documentation of their participation in Lifeline-qualifying programs. Therefore, we request that the FCC allow service providers until January 2013 to implement the full certification rule.

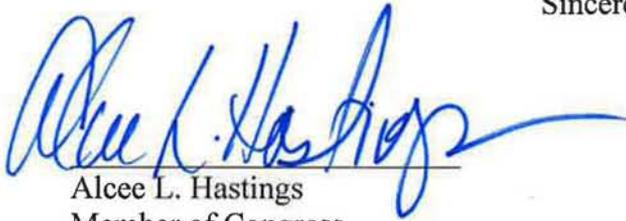
We have closely monitored the Lifeline rulemaking process since it was first announced in November 2010, and are pleased that the FCC shares in our vision of a program that is accessible to qualifying consumers as well as free of waste, fraud, and abuse. While we remain concerned that the full certification requirement may have unintended consequences on Lifeline enrollment and access, we understand the rationale behind this particular rule. Moving forward, we simply ask that service providers be given additional time to prepare for the implementation of full certification.

Currently, many states do not have eligibility databases in place to ensure that enrollees qualify for, and are in true need of, Lifeline services. If full certification is implemented in these states, we fear that current and prospective Lifeline subscribers may lose vital access to telephone service. It is our understanding that this rule is scheduled to go into full effect on June 1st. Extending this deadline by seven months to January 2013 will allow carriers to work with state governments and establish databases that can be used to determine eligibility for Lifeline.

As you well know, Lifeline is of great importance to our most economically disadvantaged constituents, who would otherwise be unable to afford basic telephone service. Great strides have been made under your leadership to modernize the program and to make it more accessible to those in need. We are confident that the FCC's reforms will go a long way to make Lifeline stronger and more effective.

Chairman Genachowski, thank you for your consideration of our request to extend the implementation deadline for full certification until January 2013. We appreciate your continued commitment to meeting the communications needs of low-income Americans, and stand ready to assist you as the FCC implements much-needed reforms to Lifeline. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



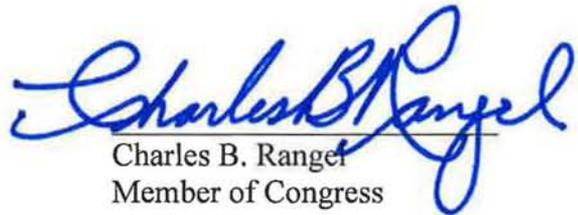
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress



Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



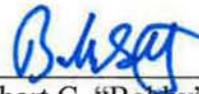
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



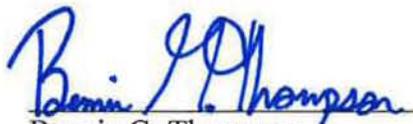
Ed Pastor
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



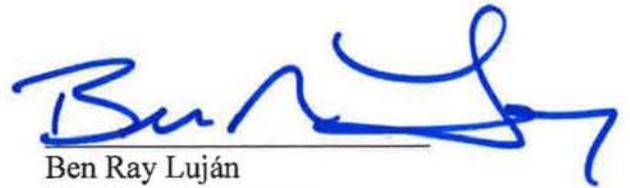
Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



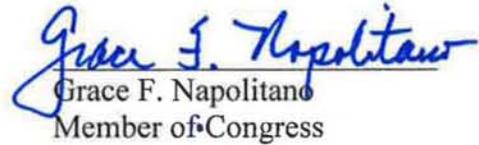
Joe Baca
Member of Congress



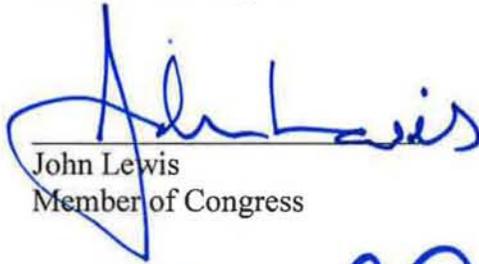
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress



Larry Kissell
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



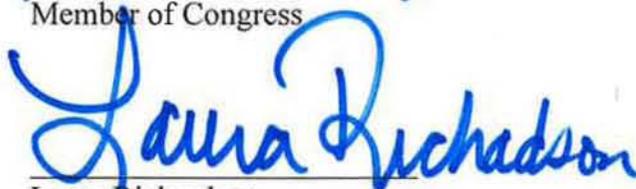
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



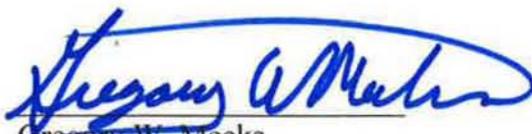
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



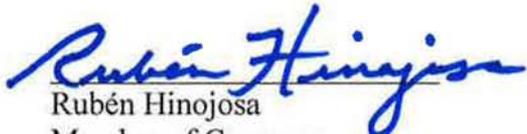
Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Brad Miller
Member of Congress


Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress


David Price
Member of Congress


Melvin L. Watt
Member of Congress