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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

December 4, 2014

1254

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

Dear Chairman Wheeler;

I was pleased to learn about the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) proposal to increase funding for the E-Rate program from \$2.4 billion to \$3.9 billion a year. The E-Rate program provides certain disadvantaged schools and libraries affordable telecommunications services and products, including internet access.

In the 2014 funding year, Wisconsin schools and libraries received \$27,610,389 in funding from the E-Rate program. This funding is critical to ensuring many of the schools in my district and across the state have Internet access and the technology essential for students developing skills necessary for the modern workforce.

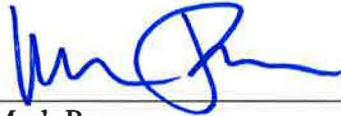
Currently, funding for the E-Rate program is capped at \$2.4 billion dollars. Schools across the country, including many in Wisconsin, rely on E-Rate funding to update obsolete and inefficient technology. According to a report by the *Milwaukee Sentinel Journal*, the cost of internet service to schools in Wisconsin is significantly higher than the national average, leaving many school districts struggling to meet students' needs.

I am deeply concerned that without increased funding for the E-Rate program, many students residing in rural Wisconsin school districts will be left behind when it comes to technology updates.

According to a FCC study, 68 percent of school districts do not meet the established goals for Internet speeds in schools to hit 1,000 megabits per second for every 1,000 students. Even more alarming, 41 percent of rural schools do not meet current connectivity goals.

I strongly encourage the FCC to move forward with its proposal to increase funding for the E-Rate Program in order to allow students the ability to access 21st Century classrooms equipped with the necessary technology. Thank you for your hard work on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress