

Kate Ruane, Senior Legislative Counsel, American Civil Liberties Union

Dear Representative,

The American Civil Liberties Union, on behalf of its more than eight million members, supporters, and activists, writes to thank you for planning to include over 7 billion dollars in funding for an emergency connectivity fund that will help elementary and secondary students afford internet access service and connected devices in the next pandemic relief package. This funding is a meaningful and substantial step towards addressing the yawning gap between children who have internet access at home and computers to connect, and those who do not. But Congress must do more to close the digital divide for all people. We are very grateful that Congress took the incredible and historic step of creating the Emergency Broadband Benefit (EBB) program in December of 2020. Unfortunately, given the size of the need for this benefit, the funding set aside for the EBB could run out in three to six months. For that reason, in addition to continuing to fund the proposed Emergency Connectivity Fund, Congress also should allocate additional funds to the EBB sufficient to last until a bridge can be built to keep all families connected even after the program ends in this pandemic relief package or at the next earliest opportunity.

Thank you again for creating the EBB and for including this additional funding that will help elementary and secondary students to access broadband and connected devices. We look forward to working with Congress to close the digital divide once and for all.

Sincerely,
Kate Ruane
Senior Legislative Counsel
American Civil Liberties Union
