



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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**Hawaii Attorney General Joins 38 Attorneys General in
Urging Congress to Fund Expanded Access to Broadband**

HONOLULU – Hawaii Attorney General Clare E. Connors has joined 38 attorneys general in urging Congress to help ensure that all Americans have the home internet connectivity necessary to participate in telemedicine, teleschooling, and telework as part of any additional legislation that provides relief and recovery resources related to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

As U.S. residents know after weeks of learning, working, socializing, and seeking healthcare from home during COVID-19, internet access is critical for basic needs.

“Internet access is necessary for so many aspects of our society to continue functioning during this pandemic,” said Attorney General Connors. “Congress should act to ensure that lack of internet access does not set back education and medical care, nor exacerbate the already difficult situation many of our fellow citizens find themselves in.”

Because of this widespread support, the bipartisan National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) has adopted this position as official policy, a strong show of support for expanded broadband throughout the country.

While the attorneys general lauded independent efforts of various companies to increase access by waiving late fees or even providing free or discounted access to students and medical providers, such efforts are not sustainable. Ultimately, the attorneys general argue, we need a national solution.

Unless Congress acts quickly, disparities in access to home internet connectivity will exacerbate existing gaps in educational and health outcomes along lines of geography, economic resources, and race.

In a letter sent to Congressional leaders, the attorneys general urge Congress to:

- Provide state, territorial, and local governments with adequate funding expressly dedicated to ensuring that all students and patients, especially senior citizens who are at risk, have adequate internet-enabled technology to participate equally in online learning and telemedicine.
- Increase funding to the U.S. Federal Communication Commission Universal Service Fund, which provides vital funding to rural and low-income populations, healthcare providers, and educators with the goal of bridging the digital divide.

With public health experts warning that a second wave of coronavirus infections may require teleschooling and telemedicine to continue for millions of Americans throughout 2020, it is critical that Congress act now to help ensure that all Americans have the home internet connectivity they need to access educational opportunities, healthcare, and to earn a livelihood.

The coalition of states and territories include: Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Alaska, American Samoa, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).

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