



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

CLARE E. CONNORS
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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Hawaii Attorney General Joins 30 Attorneys General in Urging the FCC to Provide E-Rate Funds For Remote Learning During the Pandemic

HONOLULU — Hawaii Attorney General Clare E. Connors today joined 30 attorneys general in urging the Federal Communications Commission to fund internet connectivity and internet-enabled devices to K-12 students whose schools are closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and who are learning online at home or other locations.

This month, the FCC asked for comment on petitions urging the commission to temporarily waive some restrictions on its E-Rate program to allow schools to extend their broadband internet networks to students' homes and to allow E-Rate funds to support Wi-Fi hotspots or other broadband connections for students who lack adequate internet connectivity to participate in remote schooling.

In their comment letter to the FCC, the attorneys general urge the commission to promptly take action to unlock the doors of the virtual classroom while physical schools remain closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to impact the available educational opportunities, it makes sense for the FCC to take every action possible so that learning from home is easier and more reliable,” said Attorney General Connors. “I urge the FCC to do what it can to support efforts to ensure our youth are not left behind.”

The E-Rate program provides funding to better connect schools and libraries in all parts of the nation—urban, suburban and rural. Now, all parts of the nation are struggling with the best means to educating K-12 students during the waves of a pandemic.

At least 55 million K-12 students in the U.S. have, at one time or another, been forced to rely on online learning when their classrooms were closed. When schools are closed, the living room, bedroom, or basement becomes the classroom and deserves the same E-Rate support.

School districts stand ready to use E-Rate funded services to rapidly connect their students to high-speed internet. In a recent survey of more than 2,000 E-Rate program participants, 93% reported that they would use E-Rate funds to connect students at home for virtual schooling, if allowed by the FCC.

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The attorneys general also state in their letter that, given the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FCC is authorized to amend or waive E-Rate program rules as necessary to provide broadband connectivity for remote schooling.

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser and Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson are leading this effort, and are joined by the attorneys general from Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Guam, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

A copy of the letter can be found [here](#).

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For more information, contact:

Krishna F. Jayaram
Special Assistant to the Attorney General
(808) 586-1284
Email: ATG.PIO@hawaii.gov
Web: <http://ag.hawaii.gov>
Twitter: @ATGHlgov