



January 13, 2023

Honorable John Thune
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Communications, Media, and Broadband
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Response to request for broadband program comments dated Dec. 6, 2022

Dear Senator,

Thank you for working to ensure the efficient and effective use of federal broadband funds and for the opportunity to submit our views on the historic investment Congress and the Administration have made to close the digital divide.

We write to endorse the National Urban League's (NUL) response to your request for stakeholder input. As expressed in their submission, uncertainty about the future of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is one of the leading barriers to the efficient use of federal broadband funds. Without the ACP, states and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) will struggle to make reliable, affordable, high-speed internet service universally available and sustainable. Because such service is essential to modern education, healthcare, employment, entrepreneurship, public services, and civic engagement, we believe that a sustainable ACP is critical to the wellbeing of the constituency of families and educators on whose behalf we work.

Common Sense Media is the nation's leading independent nonprofit dedicated to helping kids and families thrive in a digital world. We empower parents, teachers, and policymakers by providing unbiased information and innovative tools to harness the power of media and technology as a positive force in kids' lives. Thirteen years ago, we pioneered the first comprehensive and award-winning [Digital Citizenship Curriculum](#), which provides K-12 students across the country with the digital skills needed to maximize the positive impact of broadband and connected technology. Our curriculum is used in 75% of Title I schools, including 435 schools and 1,321 educators in South Dakota.

Common Sense Media is also a leader in broadband policy. Our recent [report](#) with Boston Consulting Group (BCG), the fourth in a [series](#), investigates how the ACP impacts ISP deployment decisions. Our report compares deployment in scenarios with and without the ACP, and it finds that the ACP significantly improves the efficiency of federal infrastructure spending. Specifically, our analysis finds that the ACP reduces the per-household subsidy needed to build in rural areas **by 25%**. And not only does the ACP improve the efficiency of federal funds, it also naturally incentivizes ISPs to build in areas with the greatest need, as well as in those un- and underserved areas that, for whatever reason, are not accurately captured on broadband maps.

Not only did we make these findings in our report, we also saw them firsthand. Last year, we led one of the nation's first and largest ACP advertising and enrollment [campaigns](#). This campaign, a pilot to inform future efforts, targeted high-eligibility communities in Arizona. Through this campaign, we saw the ACP 1) help thousands of households afford better internet or internet for the first time, and 2) incentivize ISPs to meaningfully engage with historically neglected communities. Without the ACP, many of these communities would be unable to reliably afford broadband, and ISPs would have fewer reasons to provide them with high-quality service options.

By giving stakeholders confidence that the ACP will be available for years to come, Congress could significantly improve the efficiency and efficacy of **all** federal broadband programs.

On behalf of the millions of children, parents, and educators that trust the independent and non-partisan work of Common Sense Media, we ask you to give full consideration to NUL's submission and make the ACP permanent.

Sincerely,

Drew Garner
State Broadband Policy Advisor
Common Sense Media