



April 7, 2021

The Honorable Lena Gonzalez  
 State Capitol, Room 2068  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Broadband for All legislation (SB 4)

Dear Senator Gonzalez:

We write to inform you that we support your efforts to modernize and increase the California Advanced Services Fund (CASF) with your legislation, SB 4. Californians across the state have suffered during the pandemic due to a lack of access or insufficiently robust access to the Internet that has made remote work and remote education a significant challenge.

Current law has failed to meet this challenge because it discriminates against local community bidders to build broadband infrastructure, favors slow outdated infrastructure with state money, does not cover all rural and low income Californians, and has been under funded. A recent report by EdSource found that California, despite having CASF already, has the tragic record having the largest number of students in the United States that lack sufficient access to broadband.<sup>1</sup>

We strongly support SB 4 provisions as it would remedy these shortfalls and create a program that will put a date certain on ending the digital divide with the following changes:

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<sup>1</sup> Sydney Johnson, *Disconnected: Internet Stops Once School Ends for Many Rural California Students*, EDSource SPECIAL REPORT (Dec. 6, 2019), available at <https://edsource.org/2019/disconnected-internet-stops-once-school-ends-for-many-rural-california-students/620825>; See also Julia McEvoy, *Closing California's Digital Divide: One Rural Teacher's Fight to Get Her Students Connected*, KQED (Sep. 22, 2020), available at <https://www.kqed.org/news/11838327/closing-californias-digital-divide-one-rural-teachers-fight-to-get-her-students-connected>.

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- 1) Stabilize and expand California's Internet infrastructure program (CASF) and allow the state to invest \$100s of million on broadband infrastructure every year until the digital divide is closed.
- 2) Enable local governments to bond finance more than \$1 billion with state support to secure long-term low interest funding to build local infrastructure.
- 3) Build broadband networks that meet the Governor's Executive Order's goals with an emphasis on scalability to ensure future proofing in infrastructure financed by the state to ensure access is built to last for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- 4) Enable local public entities to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure for low-income neighborhoods that lack broadband access.
- 5) Expand eligibility for state support to all rural Californian communities.

Broadband is a service as essential as water and electricity making it more critical than ever to rethink the status quo and invest in long term solutions that will address the multiple emergencies facing our state. The current deployment and availability of broadband infrastructure has failed countless millions of California families in our cities and rural communities. The time has come to make the long-term investments to secure access to education, healthcare, jobs, and government services for all communities. The time to invest is now.

Sincerely,

Abriendo Puertas/Opening Doors	EveryoneOn
Access Humboldt	Electronic Frontier Foundation
Access Now	EveryoneOn
ACLU California Action	Fight for the Future
Alliance for a Better Community	Founder Academy
AltaMed Health Services	Georgetown Friends of the Library
Bay Area Youth Climate Action Team	Golden State Power Cooperative
California Center for Rural Policy	Great Public Schools Now
California Charter Schools Association	Great School Voices
California State Association of Counties	Humboldt County Office of Education
Canal Alliance	Indivisible Sacramento
Center for Powerful Public Schools	Indivisible Ventura
Central Coast Broadband Consortium	InnovateEDU
Coalition for COVID Recovery, Support and Prevention	Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Common Sense	Khan Academy
Communities in Schools of Los Angeles (CISLA)	L.A. Coalition for Excellent Public Schools
Computer Science Teachers Association	Latino Equality Alliance
Consumer Action	Louisville Metro Office of Civic Innovation and Technology
Consumer Reports	MakeKnowledge
Contextly	Martin Vargas Vega
Council for a Strong America	Mayor, City of Daly City
County of Marin Board of Supervisors	Media Alliance
County of Monterey Board of Supervisors	MediaJustice
CUE	mohuman
Digital NEST	New America's Open Technology Institute
Educators for Excellence	Nexus Ventures
Environmental Center of San Diego	Normal Heights Indivisible

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Partnership for Los Angeles Schools  
Peninsula Young Democrats  
Public Knowledge  
Reddit, Inc.  
Rooted In Resistance  
San Diego County Office of Education

Speak UP  
TechEquity Collaborative  
Techqueria  
The Greenlining Institute  
Councilmember Tony Madrigal, Modesto City-  
District 2  
Tucows  
United Parents and Students  
Western Governors University  
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