



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

October 13, 2026

The Honorable Brendan Carr  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
45 L Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Carr:

As the representative for North Carolina's First Congressional District and a former educator, I write to strongly urge the Federal Communications Commission to preserve the E-Rate program and reject any proposal that would limit, sunset, or otherwise weaken the program's support for schools and libraries. E-Rate plays a crucial role in providing schools and students with reliable, affordable connectivity, especially in rural communities like those in eastern North Carolina. Given the importance of E-Rate to rural communities, I also call on the Commission to restore E-Rate program support for school bus Wi-Fi and internet hotspot services.

For nearly 30 years, E-Rate has helped give students in rural communities, including across eastern North Carolina, the tools they need to learn and succeed. Since 1998, North Carolina's public schools and libraries have received more than \$1 billion in E-Rate discounts, helping the state to become the first to connect all K-12 classrooms to high-speed broadband.<sup>1</sup> North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction reports that every dollar of state funding spent on E-Rate-eligible goods and services returned over three dollars in value to schools in state Fiscal Year 2025, and that in 2024 the state recouped 99 percent of the fees collected by the Commission from North Carolina residents and businesses.<sup>2</sup> From 2021 to 2025, E-Rate committed about \$30 million to the 24 public school districts in North Carolina's First Congressional District, and 20 of those districts qualified for the program's highest discount rate based on student poverty

<sup>1</sup> N.C. Department of Public Instruction. *School Connectivity / E-Rate*. <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/districts-schools-support/digital-learning-school-connectivity/school-connectivity-e-rate>; The Carolina Journal. (May 18, 2018). *North Carolina first state with broadband access in all schools*. <https://www.carolinajournal.com/north-carolina-first-state-with-broadband-access-in-all-schools/>.

<sup>2</sup> N.C. Department of Public Instruction. (January 15, 2026). *School Connectivity Initiative Legislative Update – FY2025*. <https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/104973>.

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and rural status. The Commission's consideration of narrowing the scope of services and equipment eligible for E-Rate support risks undermining this progress. E-Rate helps schools and libraries afford the recurring cost of broadband service, and those costs do not end once a school is connected. While I commend the Commission's commitment to ensuring children's online safety, these efforts should not be used to undermine E-Rate, which does not fund school devices or content. Decisions about classroom technology and screen time are best left to state and local education leaders and parents; E-Rate simply helps keep schools connected.

Additionally, I am concerned about the Commission's decision to end E-Rate program support for school bus Wi-Fi and hotspot services in September 2025. Broadband access is a significant issue in eastern North Carolina, where some students lack reliable internet at home or face long bus rides in rural areas. The demand for these services is strong. In E-Rate Funding Year 2025, districts and libraries across the country that applied for funding requested \$42.6 million to use E-Rate funds for hotspots and \$15.3 million for school bus Wi-Fi.<sup>3</sup> While the Commission has concluded that it lacks legal authority to support these services, a long bus ride is part of the school day for many rural students, and Wi-Fi on the bus or a hotspot at home can determine whether homework gets done. I strongly urge the Commission to reverse its decision and restore E-Rate program support for school bus Wi-Fi and internet hotspot services.

E-Rate is a promise to rural communities that a child's access to a quality education will not depend on their zip code. Eastern North Carolina still needs this vital program to keep students and library patrons connected. The progress North Carolina has made is real, but it can be undone if federal support is pulled back. I urge the Commission to preserve E-Rate, to reject any proposal to limit, sunset, or weaken the program, and to restore support for school bus Wi-Fi and hotspot services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress

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<sup>3</sup> School Bus Fleet. (October 13, 2025). *FCC Votes to Cut E-Rate Funding for School Bus Wi-Fi*.  
<https://www.schoolbusfleet.com/news/fcc-chair-proposes-ending-federal-funding-for-school-bus-wifi>.