



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Attorney General Frosh Joins 38 Attorneys General in Urging Congress to Fund Expanded Access to Broadband** *Access Critical for Those Studying, Working, and Seeking Healthcare from Home During COVID-19*

**BALTIMORE, MD (May 21, 2020)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today [joined 38 other 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.

“Access to reliable Internet connectivity is not a luxury, it is a necessity in every community,” said Attorney General Frosh. “COVID-19 has forced all of us into our homes and increased our dependency on the Internet, allowing us to stay connected with family, with our workplaces and schools, and most importantly to our doctors and healthcare system. Any additional relief provided by Congress should include the resources needed to provide broadband access to every corner of our state.”

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.

In addition to Maryland, the coalition of states and territories signing the letter include: Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Alaska, American Samoa, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Guam Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, 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.