

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

May 14, 2026

Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS)

Chair, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

521 Dirksen Senate Office Building, United States Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

Senator Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)

Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

730 Hart Senate Office Building, United States Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

Representative Hal Rogers (R-KY)

Chair, House Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

2406 Rayburn House Office Building, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC, 20515

Representative Grace Meng (D-NY)

Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee for Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

2468 Rayburn House Office Building, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC, 20515

Dear Chairs Moran and Rogers, and Ranking Members Van Hollen and Meng:

On behalf of the undersigned coalition of national, state, and local organizations—including leaders in digital inclusion and civil rights—we write in strong opposition to the Trump Administration’s illegal cancellation of \$2.75 billion Digital Equity Act programs – which includes the Digital Equity Planning Grant Program, the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program, and the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, passed in 2021’s Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). We urge you to reject the Administration’s removal of Digital Equity Act funds in Commerce’s [Fiscal Year 2027](#) budget request for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), continue full funding, and prevent future efforts to withhold or impound these appropriated funds, or otherwise weaken investments in this critical program.

Our coalition reflects the full diversity of communities that the Digital Equity Act was designed to serve: rural and urban communities, Tribal nations, seniors and older adults, veterans, people with disabilities, low-income households, and Black, Latino, and other historically underserved populations. While our missions vary, we are united by a shared commitment to ensuring that

every person—regardless of geography, income, age, or background—has the tools, skills, and support needed to participate fully in modern economic and civic life. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that funding for digital literacy and digital skills remain a key element of closing the digital divide.

Congress recognized this reality when it enacted the Digital Equity Act. The law explicitly directs federal agencies to serve “covered populations” —including low-income households, racial and ethnic minorities, rural residents, veterans, older Americans, people with disabilities, English learners, and incarcerated or formerly incarcerated individuals—have the tools to thrive online. These programs were created by Congress, defined in statute, and backed by bipartisan support to address the adoption and skills gaps that persist as part of the digital divide.

That is why the Administration’s abrupt cancellation of Digital Equity Act funds, and mischaracterization in public discourse as a so-called ‘racial giveaway’ in Commerce’s [Fiscal Year 2027](#) budget request for the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), is both inaccurate and deeply damaging.¹ As this Administration and Congress well know, these investments were never about favoring one community over another; they were designed to meet the clear statutory directive to ensure all people are served in every state. Ending them is a failure to execute the law and leaves millions without the resources needed to leverage broadband for education, health care, workforce opportunities, and civic participation.

The consequences of eliminating these programs are clear and measurable. While broadband deployment has accelerated, significant adoption gaps persist. Black, Latino, rural, aging, and low-income households remain disproportionately unconnected. Many families rely solely on smartphones for internet access, limiting their ability to participate in education, telehealth, remote work, and entrepreneurship. At the same time, millions of workers lack foundational digital skills, constraining workforce participation and economic mobility.

For these reasons, the Digital Equity Act and IIJA's larger Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program non-deployment funds are both essential tools. While BEAD is rightly focused on extending service to every household and business, that is only step one. Restricting federal investment to infrastructure alone undermines congressional intent and risks leaving millions behind. Ensuring that people can connect and navigate the internet effectively is equally critical, and that requires federal support for workforce development, telehealth, digital skills, education, and adoption programs.

We are especially concerned about the potential widening of inequities as artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes our economy and daily lives. Without targeted investment in digital skills, access, and adoption, underserved communities risk being further excluded from this new era of innovation and opportunity. Restoring these grant programs is not only consistent with the

¹ While the Administration illegally cancelled the Digital Equity Act implementation a year ago, that action is under review in litigation. *National Digital Inclusion Alliance v. Trump*, Docket No. 1:25-cv-3606-JDB (D.D.C.).

Administration's stated goals of equity and inclusion, but also essential to ensuring that every community can thrive in an AI-driven economy.

The Digital Equity Act and BEAD were designed to work hand in hand: one ensuring the connectivity is fully realized, the other ensuring people are equipped to use them. Both are needed to achieve lasting digital equity and achieve the U.S.'s desired goal of leading in emerging technologies like AI. Trusted local institutions stand ready to deliver these resources, but they cannot do so without sustained federal support. Research has consistently shown that community-based organizations that make up the human infrastructure of broadband are essential to building trust and driving sustainable adoption.

We urge, as top Commerce Department Appropriations Cardinals, a commitment to holding this Administration accountable for its illegal cancellation of the Digital Equity Act, reinstitution of its funds, protections via the appropriations process against future impoundment attempts, and opposition to future Digital Equity funding rescissions by way of any coming budget reconciliation measures or appropriations bills.

Communities across the country—urban and rural, young and old—have already begun building digital equity ecosystems in reliance on these funds. State broadband offices, local governments, and community-based organizations have invested significant time and resources to stand up programs that are now at risk of collapse. Allowing these efforts to be dismantled would not only waste taxpayer investments but also delay progress toward a more inclusive and competitive digital economy.

We stand ready to work with you to ensure that federal investments reflect the full scope of what it takes to close the digital divide and build an economy that works for everyone.

Sincerely,

National Urban League
American Civil Liberties Union
ASC3 (Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center)
Beyond Literacy
Black Women's Health Alliance
Black Women's Roundtable
Cambridge Community Television
CCTV
CCTV - Cambridge Community Television
Communications Workers of America
Community Media Visioning
Connect Your Community
Connections for Independent Living
CreaTV San José

Cyber-Seniors
Generations on Line
HTTP (Hispanic Tech & Telecommunications Partnerships)
Hispanic Federation
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
Intercommunity Cable Regulatory Commission
Kiss Applications Inc.
Media Alliance
MediaJustice
Multicultural Media, Telecom and Internet Council
Metropolitan Family Service
National Action Network
National Coalition on Black Civic Participation
National Consumer Law Center
National League of Cities
National Skills Coalition
NTEN
Open Technology Institute at New America
Philly Community Wireless
Public Knowledge
Public Health Innovators, LLC
Right Here, Right Now Project
scaleLIT
Sacramento Educational Cable Consortium
SEAMAAC
35 Mile Foundation
Thurston Community Media - Olympia, WA
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry
UnidosUS
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The Welcoming Center
WSCS Sheboygan

