



March 23, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
S-128 The Capitol Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
Chair, Financial Services and General  
Government Subcommittee  
730 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Hagerty  
Ranking Member, Financial Services and  
General Government Subcommittee  
251 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Esteemed Chairs and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the nearly 17 million rural and urban American families and veterans at risk, we request Congress to appropriate funding for the continuance of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

The stakes are high. Without Congressional action this year, the ACP program—which has helped millions of families in need access internet connectivity and the opportunity it delivers—will expire. Without ACP, some of our most vulnerable communities will be at a significant disadvantage for receiving adequate healthcare, fulfilling children’s educational needs, and obtaining other essential services that have been easier to access via broadband connectivity.

Approval of this appropriation request would build on Congress’ recognition of the dual solutions needed to finally close the digital divide—for consumers to have broadband available *and* for assistance in obtaining that connectivity. Congress also acknowledged that the need for additional support for families in need was neither pandemic-driven nor short-term in transitioning the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program to the longer-term ACP and appropriating an additional \$14.2 billion to fund it within the once-in-a-generation, bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

**Support for continuing the Affordable Connectivity Program is strong and bipartisan.**

A strong, bipartisan majority of voters (78%) support continuing the ACP, including 70% of Independents, 64% of Republicans, and 95% of Democrats, according to a national survey of 1,000 registered voters conducted by Public Opinion Strategies and RG Strategies in January 2023. Similar majorities also hold for urban, suburban, and rural households, who all support ACP by 68% or more. Majorities of voters across all sub-groups support continuing the program.

The key findings of the poll and methodology are attached.

**ACP families come from communities of all kinds and in every state.**

Nearly 17 million American families and veterans across every state in the country rely on the ACP and enrollment shows no signs of slowing down. The following states rank highest for ACP-enrolled households as a percentage of total households: Louisiana (21%), Kentucky (18%), New Mexico (18%), North Carolina (17%), Ohio (17%), South Carolina (16%), Alabama (16%), Mississippi (15%), New York (15%), and Oklahoma (15%). Enrollment is high in both rural and urban areas. For example, 29% of Kentuckians in the heart of Appalachia (KY-05) are enrolled as are 25% of Louisianans in rural parishes (LA-05). Congressional districts in urban areas, such as in Los Angeles (CA-22) and in and around Jacksonville (FL-04), have similarly high enrollment rates of 31% and 17%, respectively.

Connectivity is the cornerstone of full participation in American society. Everyone, no matter where they live or how much money they make, should have the ability to enjoy the benefits of connectivity and the opportunity it unlocks. ACP has made great progress toward this goal, and it cannot be allowed to backslide.

Given the important role the ACP plays in helping millions of lower-income American families, students, and veterans continue to access the internet for work, school, telemedicine, and other purposes, Congress must act now to ensure this overwhelmingly popular program is on a sustainable path and that the Americans who depend on this successful program can continue to benefit from it.

Respectfully,

Joel Thayer  
President  
Digital Progress Institute

Robert Branson  
President and CEO  
The Multicultural Media and Telecom Internet  
Council (MMTC)

## ACP ENJOYS STRONG, BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Majorities of voters across all key sub-groups support continuing the program.

	Total Support	Total Oppose
Republicans	64%	35%
Independents	70%	30%
Democrats	95%	4%
Urban	81%	18%
Suburban	78%	21%
Rural	68%	31%

	Total Support	Total Oppose	Margin		Total Support	Total Oppose	Margin
<b>Total</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>+56%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>+56%</b>
Men	70%	30%	+40%	Men <College	68%	32%	+36%
Women	84%	15%	+69%	Men College+	73%	26%	+47%
18-34	78%	21%	+57%	Women <College	80%	19%	+61%
35-44	68%	31%	+37%	Women College+	92%	7%	+85%
45-54	71%	29%	+42%	White <College	74%	25%	+49%
55-64	82%	18%	+64%	White College+	82%	17%	+65%
65+	83%	15%	+68%	VOC <College	78%	21%	+57%
Men 18-54	62%	37%	+25%	VOC College+	88%	12%	+76%
Men 55+	82%	18%	+64%	GOP/Lean	64%	35%	+29%
Women 18-54	85%	15%	+70%	Ind	70%	30%	+40%
Women 55+	83%	15%	+68%	Dem/Lean	95%	4%	+91%
Northeast	81%	18%	+63%	Conservative	60%	39%	+21%
Midwest	75%	24%	+51%	Moderate	83%	16%	+67%
South	72%	27%	+45%	Liberal	96%	3%	+93%
West	84%	16%	+68%	Trump 2020	62%	37%	+25%
White	77%	23%	+54%	Biden 2020	93%	6%	+87%
VOC	82%	17%	+65%	Lower/Working	82%	18%	+64%
Black	87%	12%	+75%	Middle	74%	24%	+50%
Hispanic	77%	23%	+54%	Upper/Well-to-Do	73%	26%	+47%

	Total Support	Total Oppose	Margin		Total Support	Total Oppose	Margin
White Men	69%	30%	+39%	Lower/Working Men	71%	28%	+43%
White Women	82%	17%	+65%	Lower/Working Women	89%	11%	+78%
VOC Men	76%	24%	+52%	Middle Men	67%	31%	+36%
VOC Women	88%	11%	+77%	Middle Women	82%	17%	+65%
Urban	81%	18%	+63%	Upper/WTD Men	71%	29%	+42%
Suburban	78%	21%	+57%	Upper/WTD Women	75%	23%	+52%
Rural	68%	31%	+37%	Employed	73%	26%	+47%
Suburban Women	87%	13%	+74%	Retired	84%	14%	+70%
Urban Core	81%	18%	+63%	Adopt Tech Yes	69%	29%	+40%
Urban Ring	75%	24%	+51%	Adopt Tech No	80%	20%	+60%
Outer Burbs	78%	22%	+56%	Internet Options Yes	76%	24%	+52%
Rural	73%	25%	+48%	Internet Options No	81%	18%	+63%
HS or Less	78%	22%	+56%	Right Direction	97%	3%	+94%
Some College	72%	27%	+45%	Wrong Track	70%	29%	+41%
College Grad	83%	16%	+67%	Cong Job Approve	81%	19%	+62%
Post Grad	85%	15%	+70%	Cong Job Disapprove	76%	23%	+53%

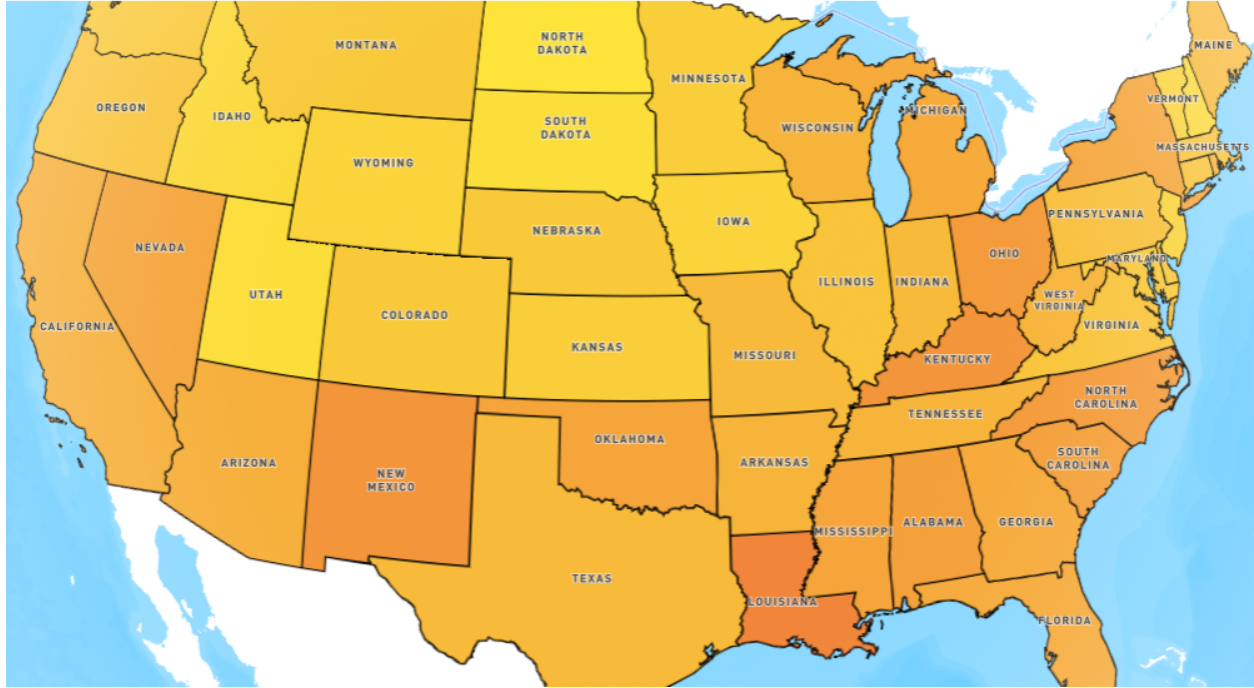
## Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies and RG Strategies conducted a national survey of N=1,000 registered voters. Half the interviews were conducted via cellphone and landline and the other half were conducted via text-to-web interviewing. Interviews were conducted January 12-16, 2023. The margin of error for a sample size of N=1,000 is +3.1%.

The formulation of the question: *The Affordable Connectivity Program is a bipartisan federal government program that helps qualifying low-income households pay for internet service. The benefit provides a monthly discount that can be used toward internet service as well as one-time assistance with purchasing a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet. Do you support or oppose continuing this program?*

For more information, see <https://digitalprogress.tech/joels-blog/>.

## The Affordable Connectivity Congressional Map



### **Background on Methodology**

As the U.S. Census Bureau has not yet released the 2022 congressional district boundaries with corresponding 5-year American Community Survey (ACS) housing and demographic estimates, the congressional district data included in the Digital Progress Institute’s Affordable Connectivity Congressional Map is a best estimate using publicly available information. The methodology can be replicated and is the result of merging the zip code level Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) ACP enrollment numbers and Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) level 2016-2021 ACS 5-year household estimates from IPUMS before aggregating to Congressional Districts via Geocorr 2022.

For more information, see <https://map.digitalprogress.tech>