

Communications Daily

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SHLB Objects to Parts of Proposed E-rate Bidding Portal

April 22, 2026

Members of the Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband Coalition met with FCC commissioner aides last week to discuss what they see as major issues with the agency's proposed competitive bidding portal for the federal E-rate program. The group recapped meetings with all three commissioners' offices in a pair of filings posted in docket 21-455. The FCC will vote on the order April 30 (see 2604090065).

Implementation of the bidding portal, which would be managed by the Universal Service Administrative Co., “would create excessive burdens on applicants (particularly small rural schools and libraries), service providers, and USAC personnel (which could deter program participation),” SHLB said. The draft order also “lacks an analysis concerning the costs of creating, implementing, and managing the bidding portal,” and its functionality “would create real areas of inconsistency and conflict with state and local requirements.”

In a speech last week, FCC Chairman Brendan Carr said the E-rate order was a next step in the commission's ongoing look at making changes to components of the USF (see 2604160065).

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