



July 2, 2024

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Office of the Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Ex Parte – Addressing the Homework Gap through the E-rate program (WC Docket No. 21-31)

Dear Ms. Dortch:

On Sunday, June 30, 2024, the American Library Association (ALA) hosted a panel presentation at the ALA Annual Conference titled: “The Future is Universal: Inclusive Changes to E-rate.” FCC Wireline Competition Bureau Attorney Advisor Molly O’Conor was among the panelists. Lauren Abner, Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives, moderated the panel. The audience included Allison Baker (FCC Wireline Competition Bureau), Megan Janicki (ALA), Kristen Corra and myself (SHLB Coalition) among other attendees of the ALA Annual Conference.

The conference session covered a range of E-rate topics, including recent updates related to the Cybersecurity Pilot Program for Schools and Libraries and the Tribal Libraries Pilot Program. In addition, the moderator Lauren Abner asked about recent developments within the Learn Without Limits program.

During the question and answer component of the session, I asked Ms. O’Conor about how the draft order on hotspot lending would address the needs of students and library patrons located in areas where, due to geography and other circumstances, Wi-Fi hotspots were not effective. I noted that other technologies, such as CBRS or EBS-based networks, might be able to serve the connectivity needs of these often-rural locations, but may not be included in the Order. Ms. O’Conor stated that the FCC shares the ALA and SHLB goals of modernizing the E-rate program and that the current draft order is a step toward this goal.

I also stated that the SHLB Coalition supports the draft order, as does ALA. Many libraries and their communities will benefit from sustainable funding to lend Wi-Fi hotspots to library patrons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Windhausen, Jr." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive style.

John Windhausen, Jr.
Executive Director
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition
1250 Connecticut Ave. NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
jwindhausen@shlb.org / 202-256-9616