

APRIL 9-11, 2025

# Protect USF Fly-In

A LOOK BACK AT THREE POWERFUL DAYS OF  
ADVOCACY, CONNECTION, AND COALITION  
BUILDING TO #PROTECTUSF



**SHLB**  
SCHOOLS, HEALTH & LIBRARIES  
BROADBAND COALITION



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# WELCOME NOTE

Dear SHLB Community,

We made history.



This April, nearly 40 SHLB members from across the country traveled to Washington, D.C. to participate in our first-ever fly-in.

Together, we met with more than 70 Congressional offices to defend and promote the Universal Service Fund (USF), the backbone of internet access for schools, libraries, health care providers, rural areas and unserved communities nationwide.

This magazine is a celebration of that milestone. Inside, you'll find snapshots from Capitol Hill, reflections from our leadership reception, member testimonials, and stories that remind us what's at stake.

Whether you joined us in person or supported from afar, your voice is part of this movement. Let's continue to advocate for ensuring that every community has access to affordable, high-speed broadband.

With gratitude,  
Joey, Kristen E, Kristen C, Saskya, and Lauren

# FLY-IN HIGHLIGHTS & TIMELINE

## Timeline



### ■ April 9

- Fly-in
- Joey & John Reception at Love, Makoto

### ■ April 10

- Hill meetings
- Capitol subway rides
- Surprise encounters with policymakers (and dogs!)
- Hill exhibits + happy hour
- Delicious Dinner

### ■ April 11

- Fly-out
- Explore DC
- Self-paced meetings

## 70 Meetings. 3 Days. 1 Mission.

From April 9-11, SHLB members met with Congressional leaders to advocate for broadband access and opportunity through E-Rate and Rural Health Care (RHC) programs.

Along the way, we shared data, personal stories, and a unified call: #ProtectUSF.





# RECEPTION RECAP

## Honoring SHLB's Leadership Transition

### Celebrating the Past, Present, and Future

We kicked things off with a heartfelt evening at Love, Makoto, welcoming Joey Wender as SHLB's new Executive Director and honoring John Windhausen Jr. for his decades of visionary leadership.

Members, partners, and friends gathered to toast SHLB's evolution and our shared commitment to advocating for broadband policies benefitting anchor institutions and their communities.



**Thank you to everyone who made it a night to remember.**





# ON THE HILL: ADVOCATING FOR USF

## Voices in Action: Congressional Meetings

### 📍 Senator Ed Markey (MA)

Joey Wender, who previously served as Senator Markey's Senior Advisor, returned to his roots, leading a meeting with a powerhouse group.

Senator Markey showed the group the signed copy of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 (on the wall in the picture's background), which created by E-Rate and the Rural Health Program.



### 📍 Senator Lisa Murkowski (AK)

Megan Janicki, Don Yarman, Kellie Larkin, Joey Wender, Christine Morris, Emily Durkin, and Adam Geisler, enjoyed meeting with Senator Murkowski's staff, who has long been a strong supporter of the USF.

### 📍 Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-25)

Carl Guaradino, Adam Geisler, Joey Wender, Beverly Sutherland, and Phil Neufeld had a great meeting with Representative Ruiz's staff.



### 📍 Rep. Debbie Dingell (MI-06)

Kristen Corra and Merri Lynn Colligan (Michigan Statewide Educational Network) snapped a quick picture after meeting with Rep. Dingell's office.

*Plus dozens more meetings with senators and representatives from across the country.*



# ON THE HILL: ADVOCATING FOR USF

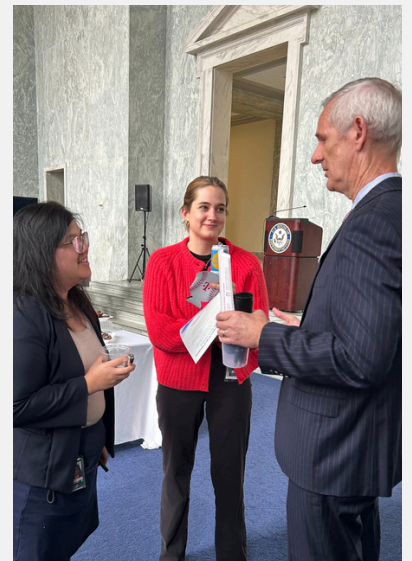
## Anchors in Action: Exhibit Showcase & Happy Hour



On the evening of April 10, SHLB members gathered for a vibrant Exhibit Showcase and Happy Hour, an opportunity to continue the conversation in a more casual setting.

Exhibitors, including NCTNA, T-Mobile, Providence Health, NETC, Fresno Unified School District, ProInfoNet, Kajeet, and SHLB, set up tables to share their work, educate Congressional staff, and highlight the real-world impact of the USF.

It was a space to mingle, build new connections, and deepen understanding of how anchor institutions across the country rely on E-Rate and Rural Health Care funding to serve their communities.



# FLY-IN ADVOCATES ROSTER

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## Advocates

Adam Geisler	Carol Hall	James Nester	Megan Janicki
Amy Passow	Christian Baker	Janice Meyers	Merri Lynn Colligan
Andrea Chambers	Christine Morris	Jeffrey Rogers	Milan Eaton
Andrew Eisley	Dan Kettwich	Jim Rogers	Morgan Lloyd
Ben Weintraub	Dan Rivera	John Graham	Philip Neufeld
Beverly Sutherland	Denise Shorey	Jordan Rogers	Spencer Brannon
Brian Thibeau	Don Yarman	Keith Krueger	Spencer Jenkins
Carrie Coogan	Elaine Williams	Kelleigh Cole	Tom Essellman
Carl Guardino	Emily Durkin	Kellie Larkin	Vanessa Gutierrez
Candice Hall	Ingrid Goodman	Kimberly Friends	

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## Organizations Represented

ADS Advanced Data Services, Inc.	Kajeet, Inc.
Aim Concepts	Kansas City Public Library
American Library Association	Michigan Statewide Educational Network
Aruba, a Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company	New England Telehealth Consortium
CDW	North Carolina Research and Education
Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)	Network (MCNC)
CSM Consulting	North Carolina Telehealth Network Association
Digital Equity Program Office of Greater Kansas	(NCTNA)
City	Ohio Public Library Information Network
e-Luminosity	(OPLIN)
E-Rate Central	ProInfoNet
E-Rate Professionals Consulting	Providence Health
EdTechnology Funds	Sno-Isle Libraries
Fresno Unified School District	Tarana Wireless
HealthConnect Networks	T-Mobile
Infinity Communications & Consulting, Inc.	Utah Education and Telehealth Network (UETN)
Janice Meyers Educational Consulting	



# SPOTLIGHT: PROTECT USF CASE STUDIES

We compiled 11 real-world stories from schools, libraries, and healthcare providers nationwide, providing proof that the USF is effective. These stories are helping educate Congress and the public on why protecting this funding is urgent and necessary.

View the [full booklet](#):

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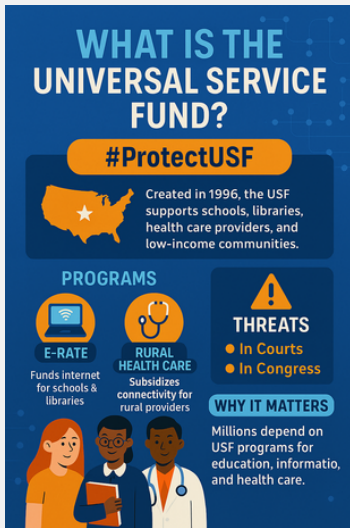
## PROTECT USF

*Case studies highlighting outcome-based impacts of  
E-Rate and Rural Health Care funding in communities*

The Universal Service Fund (USF) is a lifeline for schools, libraries, and healthcare providers, ensuring they have access to affordable, high-speed broadband. This connectivity is essential for students, library patrons, telehealth patients, and even entire communities. However, this critical funding is under threat. To highlight its impact, SHLB has gathered real-world success stories that showcase how USF programs—including E-Rate and Rural Health Care—are transforming lives and bridging the digital divide.



# RESOURCES & TOOLKITS



## Social Media Graphics

Downloadable and editable templates you can share to spread the word about the importance of the USF and amplify your advocacy efforts.

See [here](#) and [here](#).

## USF Email Template to Congress Members

A [ready-to-use email](#) you can send to your representatives urging them to support and protect the USF.

## Sample Social Media Captions

[Pre-written posts](#) to help you quickly and effectively engage your audience on LinkedIn, Facebook, X and other platforms.



## Fly-In Photos & Videos

Relive the highlights of our first-ever D.C. Fly-In with access to our full collection of event [photos and videos](#).



A [concise summary](#) of the USF, the threats it faces, and our advocacy to protect it, which will help guide your ongoing efforts.

## Protect USF Webpage

[Your hub](#) for resources, updates, and actions you can take to help safeguard the USF.



# TESTIMONIALS FROM ATTENDEES

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*SHLB's fly-in was one of the top professional experiences of my career. It was my first time advocating on Capitol Hill, and our meetings clearly showed how essential E-Rate is to schools and libraries—especially with firsthand stories from TN school districts.*

*Thanks to a lot of hard work by the SHLB team, the whole experience was exceptional! It's great to have SHLB as an advocacy partner! #ProtectUSF*

*-Candice Hall, CSM Consulting, Inc.*

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*Participating in the Fly-In has stoked a new sense of purpose in my digital inclusion work. Lawmakers appreciated the preparation and the depth of data-backed insights the SHLB group provided. Regardless of the final outcomes, I came home knowing that our efforts made a positive difference.*

*-Tom Esselman, Digital Equity Program Office of Greater Kansas City (DEPO-KC)*

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*I'm very thankful for the chance to meet with leaders committed to the Universal Service Fund and to share how it supports reliable, high-quality healthcare through medical-grade networks. Sustainable, predictable funding is essential—and modernizing the RHC Program with data-driven, real-world solutions is key to meeting current and future healthcare needs.*

*-Dan Kettwich, ADS Advanced Data Services, Inc*

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*Attending the SHLB Coalition's Congressional Fly-In was a truly meaningful and energizing experience. Thanks to SHLB's team's hard work, each meeting with congressional offices felt purposeful and smooth. It was clear that many lawmakers hadn't been fully exposed to the real-life impact of programs like E-rate, the Rural Health Care program, or the Universal Service Fund, so being there to share firsthand stories was powerful.*

*If you ever get the chance to join a SHLB fly-in, take it. Our voices matter!*

*-Carrie Coogan, Kansas City Public Library*

# FINAL WORD

Thank you to everyone who participated; your voices made a difference.

Whether you shared a stat, a story, or a handshake, you helped make the case to #ProtectUSF loud and clear.

Are you a SHLB member yet? If not, join SHLB and be part of a powerful network working to protect USF, advocate for anchor institutions, and close the digital divide for good.

[Join Now!](#)

