

The Hon. Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce
Science and Transportation
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Ted Cruz
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
510 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

June 28, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz:

The undersigned K-12 education and library organizations write to provide our strong support for the nomination of Anna Gomez to a seat on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and to urge her speedy confirmation.

We believe that Ms. Gomez's extensive experience at both the FCC and the National Telecommunications Information Administration has prepared her well to serve as an FCC Commissioner and afforded her a deep understanding of the telecommunications issues, policies, and programs on which the education and library community has long been focused. Specifically, our organizations' central concern remains the preservation and enhancement of the E-Rate program, which provides deep discounts to schools and libraries on broadband services and Wi-Fi services. Additionally, we support further efforts to address the so-called "homework gap," including continuing the two COVID-era efforts that provide robust home broadband connections to students, educators, and library patrons – the Emergency Connectivity Fund (ECF) and the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) – and allowing E-Rate support to extend to the provision of Wi-Fi on school buses.

Our organizations were heartened by Ms. Gomez's testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee on June 22, in which she recognized the importance of broadband connectivity for everyone. In her opening statement, she stated: "I believe the FCC should work to meet the demands of the people it serves. That means connecting everyone everywhere to affordable, reliable broadband Internet access. While Congress has given the FCC many important tools to close the digital divide, there is still much work to be done to ensure that every person in every county, regardless of geography or income, has access to high-speed broadband. I have experienced the fear of not being able to afford a telephone bill. I know what it means to risk the loss of connection. Ensuring that everyone in rural tribal, suburban, and urban communities can get and stay connected is critical to next century success for us all." Later, in response to a question from Senator Markey about the E-Rate, Ms. Gomez responded: "The E-Rate has done much good in connecting schools and libraries. And if confirmed, I look forward to delving into the program and how best to benefit students..."

For all of these reasons, the undersigned K-12 education and library organizations support the nomination of Anna Gomez to the FCC and seek a quick vote to confirm her.

Sincerely,

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
American Federation of School Administrators
American Federation of Teachers
American Library Association
ASBO International
Association of Educational Service Agencies
National Association for Pupil Transportation
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Federally Impacted Schools
National Association of Independent Schools
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Catholic Educational Association
National Education Association
National Rural Education Advocacy Consortium
National Rural Education Association
National School Boards Association

cc. The Hon. Ben Ray Lujan
The Hon. John Thune