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Rebecca S. Pringle
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Executive Director

June 7, 2013

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

On behalf of the three million members of the National Education Association (NEA), I applaud the announcement of your new ConnectEd initiative that will help our country's schools reach the level of broadband capacity needed for our students to learn, create, and ultimately, compete in the 21st century.

The NEA has been a strong supporter and advocate of the E-rate program and the ConnectEd initiative will modernize the E-rate to ensure that all students will have high-speed Internet access. Since its inception in 1996, the E-rate program has, for countless students, opened the door to developing the skills needed to compete in a digital age. The program has been successful at connecting nearly all our nation's schools to the Internet. In fact, it has been so successful that merely accessing the Internet is not enough. Students and educators not only depend on access to the Internet, they require high-capacity broadband connectivity to engage in classroom activities, distance education, and many more applications.

NEA believes that the time is now for critical investment in the E-rate. The demand by E-rate program applicants is typically double what is available for any given year. The ConnectEd initiative will help the E-rate program address the overwhelming demand for high-capacity broadband connectivity.

Accessing the Internet is simply not enough. Our classrooms must be built upon a broadband infrastructure that not only meets current needs but also supports 21st century teaching and learning. The increasing use of technology in the classroom will transform the role of educators allowing the educational process to become even more student-centered. In addition, ConnectEd's focus on educators' professional development mirrors NEA's belief that all educators should have access to relevant, high-quality, interactive professional development in the integration of digital learning into instruction and technology into practice.

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NEA embraces the ConnectEd initiative as key to supporting this new environment and technologies to better prepare our students for college and 21st century careers. We look forward to working with you and the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that our nation's schools have the robust broadband infrastructure necessary to educate the next generation of Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis Van Roekel".

Dennis Van Roekel
President, National Education Association

Cc: FCC Acting Chairwoman Mignon Clyburn
FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel
FCC Commissioner Ajit Pai