

Working Titles

Connectivity as a Civil Right: The Essential Battle to Fund the ACP From Stress to Access: How the ACP Is a Lifeline for Millions and Why It Must Continue At the Brink of Disconnection: The Critical Fight to Keep America Online

By Marc H. Morial & Rashad Robinson (681 words)

It is rare for 212 members of Congress to agree on anything these days. And yet there are many co-sponsors on [H.R.6929](#), the Affordable Connectivity Program Extension Act of 2024, which would provide a necessary infusion of funds to the federal program that subsidizes high-speed internet for low-income households.

But if our leaders in Congress do not bring the bill to the floor for a vote, this incredibly popular program will come to an end in May 2024, leaving millions of families with a hole to plug in their budgets in an election year. Cut off notices are going out in April.

Few will get harder hit than rural and low-income Americans, for whom high-speed broadband can be a pricey bill, demanding money that could go to other necessities such as groceries or utilities.

The Affordable Connectivity Program, or ACP, has helped 22 million households across the country save more than \$500 million per month on high-speed internet, and it is [wildly popular](#) in all areas of the United States and across all party lines.

Simply put, access to high-speed internet is not only a matter of convenience. It is a civil right and a catalyst for economic growth and social equality for working families, and our country as a whole.

However, because employers still get away with denying Black people fair wages and the benefits we deserve, they keep or push our families into poverty. One effect that's flown under the radar is that broadband remains unaffordable for millions of Americans, including the 1 out of 5 Black people who do have home internet.

That creates a cycle: denying internet access makes it impossible to succeed in many job markets, and when people are not succeeding in those markets, it excludes these families from accessing what they need to survive and thrive. But we can break that part of the cycle: make the internet affordable for everyone.

Behind statistics are lived experiences of families, workers, and students who require affordable, high-speed internet survival. We know children are [completing their homework at](#) their [local McDonald's](#) to download lectures, class notes, and finish assignments for tasks assigned from their in-person learning environments.

We know there are potential employees who cannot apply for jobs or work remotely because they do not have high-speed internet connection at home. There are [small business owners](#) who struggle to access e-commerce platforms and credit markets.

Every part of our daily life, from business, education, entertainment, and health requires that everyone has reliable and affordable access to high-speed internet.

The success of the Affordable Connectivity Program is clear. Enrollment has been successful in both rural and urban areas, and research has shown that this program has been [highly effective](#) by providing services directly to consumers through Internet Service Providers.

[A poll](#) from this past year highlighted a “strong bipartisan majority of voters (78 percent) support continuing ACP, including 64 percent of Republicans, 70 percent of Independents, and 95 percent of Democrats.”

As funding continues to run out on this program, a group of 31 Senators [signed a letter](#) urging Congressional leadership to extend full funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Compared to the tough decisions currently facing Congress, this one is easy: **fully fund the Affordable Connectivity Program.**

Funding this program is a win for all communities, children, consumers, workers, and business owners of all races, across all geographic regions. This program is an investment in the future of our effective participation in democracy — and the betterment of our country overall.

Our leaders in Congress should move swiftly to demonstrate to the public that they are working to improve economic mobility for every person in this country. If this program is allowed to run out of funding it would be an indication to the public and voters that Congress is not making the needs of everyday people a priority.

President Biden’s Administration has requested supplemental funding to continue the program. The 212 co-sponsors of H.R. 6929 have spoken. All that’s left is to bring the bill to the floor for a vote and preserve this crucial program.

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