

used for eligible costs. If there is not enough money in the fund to finance all the applications, FCC Chairman William Kennard says schools in poor and rural communities will get first priority.

Local school boards' overwhelming support for the discounts underscores how crucial the e-rate is to ensure that our students can be full participants in the Information Age. Without the e-rate, the gap between the technology haves and have nots will continue to grow.

The SLC received more than 30,000 applications for the e-rate before the April 20 deadline. These applicants have developed extensive technology plans and have lined up local funding sources to support their part of the bargain. They are counting on these discounts to start July 1 so they can begin providing services to the students they serve.

Just as this important program is getting off the ground, the telecommunications industry is backing off from its commitment to contribute enough to the FCC's Universal Service Fund to pay for the discounts.

Certain long-distance telephone companies—AT&T, MCI, and Sprint—are undermining the program by charging their customers higher rates and blaming the increases on the e-rate. Other companies—SBC, BellSouth, and GTE—have filed a lawsuit that, if successful, could destroy the e-rate program.

The fact is, the Telecommunications Act of 1996 cut the access fees the long distance carriers are charged to connect with local telephone systems. These fees will be cut even further in July.

The savings from these fee reductions would offset the long distance companies' contributions to the Universal Service Fund to finance the e-rate and also allow the companies to pass along the savings to customers. In addition, these companies, have the opportunity to make a profit by winning contracts to serve schools and libraries.

Despite earlier agreements, however, AT&T has raised its long distance rates, and now claims it won't be able to contribute to the Universal Service Fund unless it adds a surcharge to customers' phone bills.

This ploy has gotten the attention of consumer groups, who now have asked the FCC and Congress to delay implementation of the e-rate until the issue of access charge reductions is resolved.

A coalition that includes the Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, and groups representing business telephone users wrote to the FCC May 21 requesting another \$1 billion be cut annually from the access charges. They claim that is the amount consumers are being asked to pay in unrelated new line-item charges that began showing up on long-distance bills earlier this year. The groups want the e-rate to be halted until new fees are imposed to pay for it.

That would be a grave mistake. The e-rate must not be delayed or reduced. The FCC and Congress should not break their promise at the eleventh hour.

We must not let the nation's schools be held hostage to policy disputes among various sectors of the industry, government policymakers and regulators, unrelated businesses, and consumer groups. Schools and libraries—and the thousands of students, teachers, parents, and community members they serve—are consumers, too.

There is a huge demand for the e-rate. Our children's—and our nation's—future requires that our schools have access to the telecommunications services they will need to succeed in the 21st century.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

Washington, DC, June 9, 1998.

Hon. WILLIAM E. KENNARD,
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission, Washington, DC

DEAR CHAIRMAN KENNARD: We are writing to you today to express our utmost concern and support for the education rate (E-rate) created by the Telecommunications Act of 1996. It is absolutely imperative that you, as Chairman of the F.C.C., work with your fellow Commissioners to implement the intentions of Congress regarding this initiative and ensure that the E-rate receives the comprehensive funding that it has been promised. It is vital that you hear of the positive support that the E-Rate program has in Congress, as well as the valuable and practical impact that the program will directly have in all of our communities. We urge you and the Commission to ensure that funds allocated to the E-rate meet the demand that has already been demonstrated by schools and libraries in the 30,000 applications submitted thus far.

Despite the adverse message that has been relayed by a small number of Members of Congress, the E-rate has overwhelming endorsement in the House, Senate, and in communities nationwide. By creating the E-Rate, Congress clearly enumerated its commitment to guarantee that each child and community have the tools necessary to become technologically capable of participating in the global marketplace. The influx of advanced technology in our society makes it imperative for our schools and libraries to have adequate technology with which to teach the youth of our future. The E-Rate program provides discounts to schools and libraries for a limited number of services. Internal wiring, one of the most integral endeavors eligible for E-Rate discounts, would enable countless local schools and libraries access to the information superhighway.

The E-rate, financed through reductions in the regulatory fees assessed to telephone companies, is a positive and beneficial program which encourages the economic development of infrastructure for both schools and libraries. However, the uncertainty of such funding now becoming a reality greatly concerns us—the overall impact on Massachusetts would be devastating if E-Rate discounts were not provided for the projects proposed statewide. The Massachusetts Department of Education has begun the initial implementation of a statewide dial-up Internet access network for all Massachusetts educators. Though there are already over 20,000 educators who have registered for this service, without financial assistance through the E-Rate program, thousands more will be denied of a tremendous opportunity to access the Internet and ensure that they will be able to transfer information and technological skills to their classrooms.

The negative publicity that has surrounded the implementation of this program is distressing, and despite some naysayers, the program has attained solid support from local communities, educators, students, and many businesses. This effort must not be compromised nor delayed by the potential ongoing debates and criticisms that are fueled and based on misinformation. The message from local communities has been resoundingly clear—our students need to be exposed to technology and have access to as much information as possible in order to be successful and to function in modern society. The E-Rate is a prime means by which the federal government can offset, and often times initiate, the inception of high tech infrastructure in our schools and libraries.

We urge you to not impede or delay decisions to grant many Massachusetts schools and libraries with the funding needed to ac-

cess technology. Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. We look forward to hearing from you in the very near future and to working with you to promote the E-Rate program and the goals that it aims to achieve.

Very truly yours,

RICHARD E. NEAL.
JOHN W. OLVER.
JOE P. KENNEDY, II.
WILLIAM DELAHUNT.
JIM P. MCGOVERN.
MARTY MEEHAN.
JOE MOAKLEY.

E-RATE PROGRAM PROVIDES HOPE AND PROMISE TO STUDENTS AROUND THE COUNTRY

(Mrs. CAPPS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks and include extraneous material.)

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the E-rate program, which provides hope and promise to students, parents, and schools all over this country.

I have here letters in support of the School and Libraries Telecommunications Discount, and they are from school districts across the 22nd Congressional District of California. These letters clearly state the deep need that exists for these discounts and the losses which will be incurred if the program is repealed.

Dr. Gale Tissier, the Santa Maria Bonita School District superintendent writes, "Without the E-rate, our community will not be able to provide technology and Internet access for our students and families."

In the small district of Shandon, Superintendent Summers states, "Without this program we will continue to struggle with what little obsolete facilities and equipment we currently have."

Funding of the E-rate was part of a deal reached by Congress, the telephone companies, schools and libraries as part of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. I call on the phone companies to live up to this agreement and fund the program without burdening their customers. I call on Congress to support the E-rate and prepare today's students for the challenges and the opportunities of tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD letters that I referred to in my remarks.

SANTA MARIA-BONITA SCHOOL DISTRICT,
Santa Maria, CA, June 17, 1998.

Hon. LOIS CAPPS,
House of Representatives, Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN CAPPS: I am writing to ask your support for full funding of the Schools and Libraries Discount Program that has been put in place as a result of the passage of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. That program has come under attack in recent weeks. I am concerned that the tremendous opportunity it provides to help all students in America gain equal access to the benefits of modern technology and the Internet might be lost in the debate.

While the FCC has ordered funds for the support of this program to be collected, the

amount to be collected is less than the amount that the program originally set as being needed. It will also not cover all of the requests for the current funding cycle. This means that many projects will not be funded. The FCC has acted courageously in setting even this funding amount in light of the extreme pressure exerted on it from the large TELCOs and other detractors of the program. The TELCOs claimed need to add 5% to long distance rates to cover the costs of Universal Service has been blamed on the Schools and Libraries Discount program. In fact, only a little over one third of that amount (1.5%) would raise more than enough to fully fund the program. With the elimination of local access charges starting in July, the TELCOs will save much more than that amount.

This is a landmark program that will help assure a brighter future for many students who otherwise will not be able to benefit from the rich technology that can transform education in our country. Our community will not be able to provide technology and Internet access for our students and families, of which less than 20% now have access to computers and the Internet at home, without this program. The school may be the only place that the next generation of workers and consumers can get the training and experience they need to compete in the 21st century job market.

We ask for your support for the future of our children and the full funding of the Schools and Libraries Discount Program. We need a strong voice in this debate in favor of the program.

Sincerely,

GAIL M. TISSIER,
Superintendent.

SHADON UNIFIED SCHOOLS,
Shandon, CA, June 18, 1998.

Hon. LOIS CAPPS,
U.S. Congress,
San Luis Obispo, CA.

DEAR CONGRESSWOMAN CAPPS: I want to express my thanks to you for your fine work on behalf of the schools and school children of San Luis Obispo County. We in Shandon have been encouraged by the time you have taken to listen our requests for relief from some of the special problems of the smaller districts in low income areas.

I am alarmed, though, after the wonderful promise offered by the FCC "e-rate" process, that there are those in the Congress that are working to dilute its value to us or to eliminate the program entirely. If there are those who harbor doubts about the worth of this program, I would love to have them visit my schools.

For Shandon children, this program will absolutely offer a chance for technological literacy on a par with school children in the most advantaged schools. Large numbers of our families are at or near the poverty level, and our district has no economies of scale. This program will allow us to acquire nearly \$200,000 worth of services, wiring, and equipment at less than one-fourth the cost. Without this program, we will continue to struggle with what little obsolete facilities and equipment we currently have.

Every one of my employees works very hard to get the most out of what we have. Our students are motivated and eager to learn.

Please, carry this message to your colleagues: Help me to help these people!

Sincerely,

RICHARD L. SUMMERS,
Superintendent.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of Jan-

uary 7, 1997, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mrs. NORTHUP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. NORTHUP addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MILLER of Florida addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. FILNER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FILNER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DIAZ-BALART addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

INDONESIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN IRIAN JAYA/WEST PAPUA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Speaker, my remarks, in sharing these thoughts with my colleagues, I have entitled Indonesia's Human Rights Violations to the People of the West Papua, New Guinea.

Mr. Speaker, many of our colleagues are familiar with Indonesia's dismal record of human rights violations in East Timor. The abuses have been well publicized and documented, especially the Dili massacre of 1991, where hundreds of innocent Timorese were killed by government security forces. What has not received much attention, Mr. Speaker, is the tragic story of the people of West Papua, New Guinea, or Irian Jaya, as the people of New Guinea have renamed that province. West Papua, New Guinea, borders the independent nation of Papua, New Guinea, and forms the western half of the world's second largest island.

Mr. Speaker, the recent violence by the Indonesian government against the people of West Papua, New Guinea, is nothing new. It is part and parcel of the long history of Indonesia's oppression of the native Melanesian people of West Papua, New Guinea.

In 1961, the people of West Papua, New Guinea, with the assistance of Holland and Australia, prepared to declare independence from its Dutch colonial master. This enraged Indonesia, which invaded West Papua, New Guinea, and threatened war with Holland. As a Cold War maneuver to counter Soviet overtures for Indonesia to become a member of the Communist block, the United States intervened in the West Papua, New Guinea, issue. After the Dutch were advised that they could not count on the support of the allies in a conflict with Indonesia, Holland seized involvement with West Papua, New Guinea's, independence. Indonesia thus took West Papua, New Guinea, in 1963, suppressing the West Papua, New Guinea, people's dreams of freedom and self-determination.

In 1969, a referendum called the "Act of Free Choice" was held to approve the continued occupation by force of West Papua, New Guinea, by Indonesia. West Papuans called it the "Act of No Choice". Listen to this, Mr. Speaker. Only 1,025 delegates, hand picked by the Indonesian government, were allowed to vote, and bribery and threats were used to influence them. The rest of the 800,000 citizens, the local, or the indigenous Melanesians, the 800,000 West Papua, New Guineans, had no say in the undemocratic process. Despite calling for a one-person, one-vote referendum, the United Nations recognized the so-called vote.

Mr. Speaker, since Indonesia took over West Papua, New Guinea, the native Melanesian people have suffered under one of the most repressive and unjust systems of colonial occupation ever known in the 20th Century. The Indonesian military has waged an ongoing war against the free Papuan movement and their supporters since the 1960s, and against the civilian populace that has objected to Indonesia's plan for development in West Papua. An example of the latter are the thousands of killings associated with the expansion of the Freeport copper and gold mines in West Papua, New Guinea.

Incredible as it may seem, Mr. Speaker, estimates are that between 100,000 to 300,000 indigenous West Papua, New Guineans, have been killed or have simply vanished or disappeared from the face of the earth during Indonesian colonization. Mr. Speaker, the depth and intensity of this conflict, spanning three decades, underscores the fact that the people of West Papua, New Guinea, do not have common bonds with nor accept being part of Indonesia.

The indigenous people of West Papua, New Guinea, are racially, culturally and ethnically different from the majority of Indonesians. West Papuans