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SHLB Coalition Applauds ConnectEd Initiative

The following statement concerning President Obama's Announcement of the ConnectED Initiative can be attributed to John Windhausen, Jr., Executive Director of the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition (pronounced "SHELL-bee Coalition"):

"The SHLB Coalition applauds President Obama's announcement of the ConnectED Initiative. Schools, libraries and other community anchor institutions have a critical need for affordable, high-speed connections to the Internet to provide essential educational, medical, and information services for their communities. Together, schools and libraries ensure learners have access to technology-enabled and personalized educational opportunities during the school day—and beyond. From online assessments to interactive online tutoring and research resources, high-capacity bandwidth is essential to powering a robust educational ecosystem.

Unfortunately, the vast majority of schools, libraries and other community anchor institutions do not have sufficient broadband capabilities to take maximum advantage of these technologies. Nearly 80 percent of school and library respondents to a 2010 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) survey say their broadband connections do not fully meet their needs. We are falling far short of Goal #4 in the National Broadband Plan, which calls for anchor institutions in all communities to have at least 1 Gigabit per second broadband connections. According to the National Broadband Map, most community anchor institutions have less than 25 Mbps. The President's announcement today recognizes that more action must be taken to ensure that schools and libraries have the high-quality broadband services and technologies they need to provide their communities with 21st Century services."

The SHLB Coalition is a broad-based coalition of non-profit and for-profit organizations that share the goal of ensuring open, affordable, high-capacity broadband for anchor institutions and their communities. Enhancing the broadband capabilities of community anchor institutions promotes economic growth and enables the most vulnerable segments of our population to be equal participants in the 21st century society and economy.

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