



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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OFFICE OF FCC COMMISSIONER AJIT PAI RELEASES FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS FOR FCC'S E-RATE PROPOSAL

Proposal Slashes Funding Available for Internet Connectivity

Tomorrow, the FCC is scheduled to vote on a proposal to change E-Rate, a program designed to help schools and libraries connect to the Internet. That proposal promises over \$5 billion for Wi-Fi but doesn't identify where the money will come from to fund this new program.

After crunching the numbers provided by FCC staff, the Office of Commissioner Ajit Pai has developed financial projections that validate the concerns of congressional leaders of both parties that the proposal's promises would come out of funding available today for Internet connectivity. Here are the results:

- Over the next five years, the FCC's Wi-Fi proposal **would cut over \$2.7 billion** (\$2,716,652,262) in funding available for Internet connectivity for schools and libraries.
- In Year 3, the proposal would cut over \$645 million (\$645,658,643) or **27% of funds** available for Internet connectivity.
- In Year 4, the proposal would cut over \$985 million (\$985,937,579) or **39% of funds** available for Internet connectivity.
- In Year 5, the proposal would cut over \$1.085 billion (\$1,085,056,039) or **41% of funds** available for Internet connectivity.
- Because of these spending cuts, **many rural schools would lose all of their funding** for Internet connectivity in Years 3 through 5.

The FCC's Washington-knows-best approach would deprive local school districts of the flexibility to meet local needs. By slashing funds available for Internet connectivity, the program will likely provide many American students with "Wi-Fi to nowhere."

Educators and librarians deserve better than more broken promises. The better course would be fiscally responsible, student-centered E-Rate reform. This would promote digital learning and place trust in local communities, instead of government officials in Washington, DC.