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## **SHLB, AASA, ALA, All4Ed, Benton Institute, CoSN, Common Sense Media, and Mission Telecom are Disappointed at FCC Decision to End Bus Wi-Fi, Hotspots**

**Washington, D.C. (September 30, 2025)** – The Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition, AASA, ALA, All4Ed, Benton Institute, CoSN, Common Sense Media, and Mission Telecom expressed disappointment with today’s Federal Communications Commission (FCC) vote to end E-Rate support for school bus Wi-Fi and hotspot lending programs.

The FCC’s decision reverses its 2023 ruling, which recognized Wi-Fi on school buses as an eligible educational purpose under E-Rate, as well as its 2024 order authorizing hotspot lending programs for schools and libraries.

“Ending these programs takes away proven, cost-effective solutions that close the Homework Gap, particularly for low-income and rural students,” said **Joseph Wender, Executive Director of the SHLB Coalition**. “Students who rely on long bus rides to complete assignments and library patrons who depend on hotspots for work, education, or telehealth will suddenly lose access to essential tools. This decision is a step backward.”

“AASA is disappointed in today’s vote by the FCC to end the school bus wi-fi and hotspot lending programs,” said **Noelle Ellerson Ng, Chief Advocacy & Governance Officer for AASA, The School Superintendents Association**. “It is a clear step backward for student connectivity, rolling back proven, cost-effective supports, and a step that will exacerbate the Homework Gap, especially for students in low-income and rural communities who rely on these services for schoolwork.”

“We don’t yet know the full extent of what this vote means for libraries and schools and the communities we serve, but we do know that libraries were relying on sustainable E-Rate funding,” said **Sam Helmick, President of the American Library Association**. “ALA is both disappointed by the FCC’s takebacks and discouraged by the lack of due process, which left no opportunity for staff, patrons, and library advocates to give input on the draft order. For years, we have engaged in the rulemaking process in good faith, partnering with the FCC to fulfill its mandate to make reliable, high-quality broadband available nationwide. And today, the Commission openly voted to snatch back the opportunity to offer more Americans, especially in rural areas, the high-speed internet access to do the business of life online – pay bills, make telehealth appointments, fill out school applications – after the library closes.”

“We are disappointed by today’s repeal of the FCC’s support for Wi-Fi hotspots and Wi-Fi on school buses,” **Amy Loyd, CEO of All4ed**. “This decision threatens to widen the Homework Gap by cutting off a vital source of internet access funding for students—especially in low-income and rural communities. Allowing schools and libraries to use E-Rate funds for Wi-Fi hotspots and Wi-Fi on school buses is a common-sense step that reflects the realities of modern learning. Repealing this rule helps no one.”

“The Benton Institute is saddened by the FCC’s first rollback of this popular and effective program,” said **Revati Prasad, Executive Director of the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society**. “The losers today are the children and lifelong learners who will be cut off from the internet. Chairman Carr’s cruel move to delete our kids’ Internet connections won’t make America smarter. Parents, teachers, students, and lifelong learners throughout the country understand firsthand how the Internet has become one of the most transformative learning tools of our generation. Today’s major digital disconnect will likely leave those we care about less prepared to compete and win the jobs of the future.”

“At a time when digital access is essential for learning, policymakers should be expanding access—not rolling it back. The FCC’s decision to strip broadband access from students—whether on school buses, at home, or in community spaces—is a serious mistake,” said **Keith R. Krueger, CEO of CoSN**.

“Cutting off kids’ internet access is cutting off their future,” said **Amina Fazlullah, Head of Tech Policy Advocacy for Common Sense Media**. “In today’s increasingly online learning environment, it is essential that students have internet access for homework. The FCC’s vote today to strip away internet access for millions of kids is a betrayal of every student who needs and deserves the same chance to learn as their peers. It will only widen the Homework Gap — and hurt rural students especially hard — when our focus should be on closing it.”

“This disappointing decision has abruptly weakened one of the most effective tools we have to close the digital divide, particularly in rural communities,” said **Mark Colwell, Director of Broadband Operations at Mission Telecom**. “We remain committed to working with schools and libraries to provide affordable alternatives so that no student or lifelong learner is left behind.”

The coalition emphasized that:

- **School Bus Wi-Fi** enables students, particularly those in rural areas with long commutes, to utilize their travel time for coursework. For example, in New Mexico, Farmington Municipal Schools equipped its 90 buses with Wi-Fi, serving over 6,500 students daily. Parents reported that children returned home with homework already completed.
- **Hotspot Lending Programs** proved indispensable for families, small businesses, and veterans. For example, in Appalachian Ohio, the Brown County Public Library’s hotspot program allowed homeschool families to join virtual classes, entrepreneurs to run mobile businesses, and veterans to participate in telehealth appointments and certification testing.

Although disappointed by today’s outcome, SHLB and its partners will continue to advocate for policies that expand broadband access and support community anchor institutions. These programs demonstrated the power of flexible connectivity solutions, and SHLB remains committed to ensuring that schools, libraries, and the communities they serve are not left behind.

## Media Availability

SHLB's executive director [Joey Wender](#) is available for interviews. For more information, visit [www.shlb.org](http://www.shlb.org) or follow @SHLBcoalition on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), or [X](#).

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**About SHLB:** The SHLB Coalition is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) advocacy organization that supports open, affordable, high-quality broadband connections for anchor institutions and their surrounding communities. The SHLB Coalition is based in Washington, D.C., and has a diverse membership of commercial and non-commercial organizations across the United States. To learn more, visit [www.shlb.org](http://www.shlb.org).

**About AASA:** AASA, The School Superintendents Association, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders in the United States and throughout the world. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to equitable access for all students to the highest quality public education. For more information, visit [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org).

**About ALA:** The American Library Association is the largest non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to America's libraries. The ALA mission is to empower and advocate for all libraries and library workers to ensure equitable access to information for all. For nearly 150 years, ALA has provided resources for information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more information, visit [www.ala.org](http://www.ala.org).

**About Benton:** The Benton Institute for Broadband & Society is a 44-year-old nonprofit working to make sure everyone in the United States can use and benefit from high-quality, affordable broadband. Westrengthen local, state, and national leadership by providing the timely information and analysis, practical guidance, and advocacy needed to articulate and implement a broadband for all agenda. To learn more, visit [www.benton.org](http://www.benton.org).

**About CoSN:** CoSN, the world-class professional association for K-12 EdTech leaders, stands at the forefront of education innovation. We are driven by a mission to equip current and aspiring K-12 education technology leaders, their teams, and school districts with the community, knowledge, and professional development they need to cultivate engaging learning environments. Our vision is rooted in a future where every learner reaches their unique potential, guided by our community. CoSN represents

over 13 million students and continues to grow as a powerful and influential voice in K-12 education.  
[www.cosn.org/](http://www.cosn.org/)

**About Common Sense Media:** Common Sense Media is dedicated to improving the lives of kids and families by providing the trustworthy information, education, and independent voice they need to thrive. Our ratings, research, and resources reach more than 150 million users worldwide and 1.4 million educators every year. Learn more at [commonsense.org](http://commonsense.org).

**About Mission Telecom:** Mission Telecom delivers broadband solutions that expand reliable, high-speed connectivity to underserved communities, partnering with anchor institutions to help close the digital divide.