



# Herbert H. Slatery III Attorney General & Reporter

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## **AG SLATERY URGES CONGRESS TO FUND EXPANDED ACCESS TO BROADBAND**

*Access critical for those studying, working, and seeking healthcare from home during COVID-19*

Nashville- General Herbert H. Slatery III has joined 38 attorneys general in urging Congress to help ensure that all Americans have the home internet connectivity necessary to participate in telemedicine, teleschooling, and telework as part of any additional legislation that provides relief and recovery resources related to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Access to broadband needs to be increased,” said General Slatery. “The COVID-19 health crisis has all made us well aware that internet access is critical for basic needs.”

While the attorneys general lauded independent efforts of various companies to increase access by waiving late fees or even providing free or discounted access to students and medical providers, such efforts are not sustainable. Ultimately, the attorneys general argue, we need a national solution.

Unless Congress acts quickly, disparities in access to home internet connectivity will exacerbate existing gaps in educational and health outcomes along lines of geography, economic resources, and race.

In a letter sent to Congressional leaders, the attorneys general urge Congress to:

- Provide state, territorial, and local governments with adequate funding expressly dedicated to ensuring that all students and patients, especially senior citizens who are at risk, have adequate internet-enabled technology to participate equally in online learning and telemedicine.
- Increase funding to the U.S. Federal Communication Commission Universal Service Fund, which provides vital funding to rural and low-income populations, healthcare providers, and educators with the goal of bridging the digital divide.

With public health experts warning of a second wave of coronavirus infections, it is critical that Congress act now to help ensure that all Americans have the home internet connectivity they need to access educational opportunities, healthcare, and to earn a livelihood.

To read the letter, click here:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/attorneygeneral/documents/pr/2020/pr20-21-letter.pdf>





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The coalition of states and territories include: Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, North Carolina, Alaska, American Samoa, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Guam Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

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