

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Ke Ke'ena O Ka Hope Kia'āina

32nd Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Labor and Technology
Committee on Government Operations

April 15, 2024

Testimony on
**H.C.R. 29 – URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT
CONTINUED FUNDING OF THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

Chairs Aquino and McKelvey, Vice Chairs Moriwaki and Gabbard, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of H.C.R. 29** which urges the United States Congress to support continued funding of the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Fast, reliable, and affordable access to the internet is no longer a luxury but essential to everyday life. To ensure increased access to the internet, the Federal Communications Commission launched the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) in December 2021 to provide a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households, up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands, including Hawaiian homesteads, and up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer. Currently, over 60,000 Hawai'i households benefit from the ACP, leveraging affordable internet for remote work, tele-health, e-commerce, and distance learning. Despite this success, the ACP faces a shutdown due to insufficient Congressional funding, risking these households' internet access. Although our Congressional delegation supports the continuation of funding, we strongly urge Congress to act quickly to sustain this vital program.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of H.C.R. 29.



**Testimony of Michael Bagley
Executive Director of Public Policy
April 11, 2024**

To: Senator Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations

Re: Testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of HCR 29 – URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT CONTINUED FUNDING OF THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

Hearing Date: April 15, 2024, at 3:00 PM

Chair Aquino, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology:
Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee on Government Operations:

On behalf of Verizon, I am providing testimony in support of HCR 29, a House Concurrent Resolution urging the United States Congress to support continued funding of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

The Resolution recognizes that this valuable program which was initiated by the Biden Administration and supported by Congress on a Bi-Partisan basis, has been critical for Hawaii citizens and participants across the country to get assistance with the delivery of broadband to themselves and their families.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) helps ensure needy Americans afford internet access. The ACP provides qualifying consumers a discount of up to \$30 a month toward the internet service of their choice and up to \$75 a month for qualifying households on tribal lands. In addition to a service discount, enrolled households will receive a one-time discount of up to \$100 toward a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet. The ACP puts consumers in the driver's seat. Participants can use their ACP discount to purchase whatever type of internet service best meets their needs.

The ACP has been extremely successful in getting Americans connected without the need for a heavy-handed approach by regulators that stifles innovation and increases government overreach. That is why conservative leaders across the country have embraced the program. Presently more than 16.8 million U.S. households subscribe, and this number continues to rise. Given the important role the ACP plays in ensuring millions of low-income households can continue to access the internet for work, school,

telemedicine, and more, Congress must act to reauthorize funding and preserve this incredibly impactful program. **Hawaii residents have collectively received more than \$28 million in federal funding from the program to date** – and would continue to receive substantial funding if the program is continued.

The ACP recognizes that all Americans need broadband. It's critical that all Americans have affordable access to get online, pursue jobs or education, connect with a health care provider, obtain job training, and connect with loved ones. Access to broadband equips low-income families to compete for better paying jobs, take advantage of remote work, get an online education, obtain valuable digital skills and more. All of these benefits facilitate social mobility and financial success for communities who need it most.

The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) is an investment in the American consumer. The benefit provides low-income families with access to necessary technology -- internet service --which allows the persons in those households, including children, the tools to rise out of poverty and become financially independent.

The structure of the ACP puts broadband choice in the hands of consumers and enables them to find jobs, do homework, see a doctor, pay bills, check bus schedules, connect with friends and family, remain active with their faith community, and participate in the digital economy. Democratic and Republican members of Congress, as well as Governors in both Parties, feel that it is important that the ACP be extended, which presently set to expire in May 2024, and have taken efforts to fund the program.

HCR 29 would encourage Congress to continue funding the ACP and continue to provide benefits to Hawaii residents. We urge the Committee to pass HCR 29.

Thank You,

Michael Bagley

Written Statement of

Jeannine Souki, Senior Manager – Government & Regulatory Affairs

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY &
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

April 15, 2024, 3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

**SUPPORT FOR:
H.C.R. 29 – URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT CONTINUED
FUNDING OF THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM**

To: Sen. Henry Aquino, Chair
Sen. Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology

Sen. Angus McKelvey, Chair
Sen. Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Government Operations

Re: Testimony providing support for HCR 29

Aloha Honorable Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit support for HCR 29, urging the United States Congress to support continued funding of the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

This resolution underscores the value of ACP to more than 60,000 qualifying households across Hawaii since the Federal Communications Commission launched the program on December 31, 2021. The ACP provides an opportunity for U.S. households with incomes up to 200% of the poverty rate to access broadband with a discount of up to \$30/month for internet services and up to \$75/per month for beneficiaries living in Hawaiian Homelands, with a one-time discount of up to \$100 toward a computer or tablet.

For these reasons, Hawaiian Telcom supports the passage of HCR 29, to send a strong signal to Congress to continue funding the ACP so Hawaii's most vulnerable households can resume receiving federal benefits to access to broadband services.



Charter Communications
Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Hawaii State Capitol
Monday, April 15, 2024

SUPPORT FOR H.C.R. 29 - URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT CONTINUED FUNDING OF THE AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM.

Chair Aquino, Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of H.C.R. 29, a resolution that urges Congress to extend the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter supports efforts to promote digital equity and broadband access and we strongly support this resolution. Broadband internet access is more important than ever and the ACP offers a tremendous opportunity to help low-income families stay connected, providing eligible households a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service and up to \$75 per month for households on the Hawaiian Home Lands. Currently, more than 60,000 families in Hawaii rely on the ACP. We join the legislature in urging Congress to provide additional funding for consumers participating in the program, which will empower thousands of families in rural and urban communities in our state to maintain the connectivity helping to improve their lives.

Charter believes that every Hawaii resident should have reliable access to the Internet. Hawaii is slated to receive over \$200 million in federal grants for broadband infrastructure in the immediate future (via the Coronavirus Capital Project Fund and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program), in addition to private investments already being made by the industry. The continuation of the ACP will help ensure that the benefits of these broadband infrastructure deployment programs are felt by everyone in Hawaii.

Mahalo for the opportunity testify in support of H.C.R 29.

HCR-29

Submitted on: 4/13/2024 7:48:00 AM

Testimony for LBT on 4/15/2024 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen Awai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support HCR29 for the Affordability Connectivity program. I need such programs to be up to date with online events. What's interesting is that some programs say there's a \$30 discount, sometimes \$30 for either a telephone line, which was called a Lifeline before needed to keep those that were poor in touch with family and other assistance. But when you sign up for the program, apparently I was at such a poverty level, I qualified for an even cheaper internet connection, which was still copper at less than \$13/month. I don't need fast connection, so copper was fine instead of the faster line perhaps that my daughter would need. But also, if you look for a job, there is a Free Government Phone program if you are already listed with other welfare programs but is dependent on your family income. Just that you have to use it at least once a month, but it is a smart phone! I wanted a land line, especially if my cellphone was lost or broken, but the free phone worked even better! Many programs from federal government are available, but not well known to the public.

LATE

**Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
and
Senate Government Operations Hearing**

Date: April 15, 2024
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Where: State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
RE: **SUPPORT of HCR29 - Relating to the Affordable Connectivity Program**

Aloha mai e Chair Aquino, Chair McKelvey, Vice Chair Moriwaki, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Committees,

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals we **strongly support HCR29** which urges the Congress to renew and extend the **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**.

Without congressional extension, over 60,700 Hawaii households will lose their ACP benefit at the of April this year. For many, that will mean they will no longer have Internet service.

Over the past four years during and since COVID, our organizations have collaborated, each within their own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, healthcare and access to other essential services facilitated by the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Through the work of the Broadband Hui members, we have supported both broadband infrastructure and Digital Equity development in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, provided digital devices for students and families and digital literacy programs for kūpuna, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

For these reasons, we kindly request you support **HCR29** urging Congress to extend the Affordable Connectivity Program.

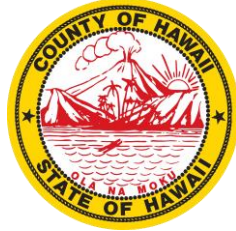
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

(Please see the organizations and names of individuals on the following pages.)

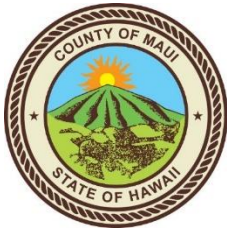


Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29

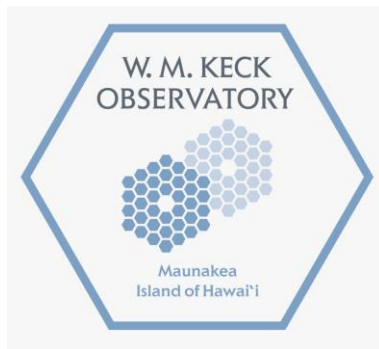
Logos of Supporting Organizations



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29



Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
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Jeanne Skog	Skog Rasmussen LLC	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29

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Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29

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Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HCR29

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