

**February 23, 2021**

**ATTORNEY GENERAL RAOUL URGES THE FCC TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR REMOTE LEARNING DURING THE PANDEMIC**

**Chicago** — Attorney General Kwame Raoul, as part of a coalition of 30 attorneys general, today urged the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to fund internet connectivity and internet-enabled devices for K-12 students whose schools are closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and who are learning online at home or other locations.

This month, the FCC sought comments on petitions filed by a coalition of stakeholders urging the commission to temporarily waive certain restrictions on its E-rate program to allow schools to extend their broadband internet networks to students' homes. The petitions also urge the FCC to allow E-rate funds to be used to provide Wi-Fi hotspots or other broadband connections for students who lack adequate internet connectivity to participate in remote learning.

[In their comment letter to the FCC](#), Raoul and the attorneys general urge the commission to promptly take action to facilitate students' access to remote learning while schools remain closed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"When the pandemic closed classrooms, it exacerbated inequities in education by putting students who have limited or no internet access at a further disadvantage," Raoul said. "The FCC should act immediately to ensure that, regardless of where they live, students can access the internet – a resource more crucial to learning and achievement than ever before."

The E-rate program provides funding to better connect schools and libraries throughout the nation to the internet. Currently, communities around the country – urban, suburban and rural alike – are trying to determine the best means of educating K-12 students during the pandemic.

At least 55 million K-12 students in the U.S. have, at one time or another, been forced to rely on online learning when their classrooms were closed. When schools are closed, living rooms, bedrooms and basements become classrooms, and therefore deserve to receive funds through the same E-rate program.

School districts stand ready to use E-rate funded services to rapidly connect their students to high-speed internet. In a recent survey of more than 2,000 E-rate program participants, 93% reported that they would use E-rate funds to connect students at home for virtual learning, if allowed by the FCC.

Raoul and the attorneys general also state in their letter that, given the special circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FCC is authorized to amend or waive E-rate program rules as necessary to provide broadband connectivity for remote learning.

Joining Raoul in filing the comment letter are the attorneys general from Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.