

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2024

The Honorable Jessica Rosenworcel
The Honorable Brendan Carr
The Honorable Geoffrey Starks
The Honorable Nathan Simington
The Honorable Anna Gomez
Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street, Northeast
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairwoman Rosenworcel and Commissioners Carr, Starks, Simington, and Gomez:

As Hispanic Members of Congress, we share your commitment to ensuring affordable and accessible high-performance broadband service for all communities, particularly those disproportionately impacted by the digital divide. However, today, we write to express our deep concern regarding the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) proposed rulemaking to regulate bulk billing arrangements, and urge you to consider withdrawing this item from circulation.

Bulk billing has been a proven tool for building owners and community associations since the 1970s, empowering them to secure substantially better cable and broadband deals for their residents. We understand that this model leverages the collective purchasing power of residents to negotiate lower prices, infrastructure upgrades, and superior customer service that individual homeowners could not obtain alone.

The FCC's own 2010 study affirmed the predominantly positive impact of bulk billing on consumers, citing reduced rates, operational efficiencies, and enhanced broadband deployment:

“[B]ulk billing arrangements predominantly benefit consumers, through reduced rates and operational efficiencies, and by enhancing deployment of broadband. Based on the evidence of all the effects of bulk billing on consumers, we do not prohibit any MVPD from using bulk billing arrangements.”

In the years since the FCC's findings, technological advancements and market evolution have only amplified the benefits of these arrangements for consumers. Today, these arrangements may allow residents to pay 50% or less for services compared to retail offerings for individuals. Providers often deliver these services over fiber infrastructure and include managed Wi-Fi. Moreover, bulk billing has become a crucial tool for many cities and public housing authorities to bridge the digital divide, offering free broadband to low-income households through these arrangements – a benefit not previously considered by the FCC. The significant cost savings and improved broadband access provided by bulk billing underscore the importance of preserving these arrangements.

As CHC members, we have steadfastly championed robust and affordable broadband service for Latino communities. We are pleased that home broadband adoption among Hispanic adults has surged 26 percentage points since 2010, reaching 75% in 2023, according to [Pew Research Center data](#). This significant progress, including a notable 10-point jump since 2021, is a testament to effective policies, particularly under this administration, coupled with positive market trends, including the growth of bulk billing arrangements. This data is supported by the positive feedback we've received from Latinos across various housing types – including apartments, single-family homes, and communities with homeowners' associations – who have experienced noticeable improvements in their broadband service over time. However, the 75% adoption rate among Hispanic adults still trails the national average of 80%, underscoring the persistent digital divide within the Latino community and the need for continued efforts to expand access.

We are thus surprised and deeply disappointed by the FCC's consideration of proposals to regulate bulk billing arrangements. We are unaware of any evidence warranting further scrutiny. Regulating these agreements will undercut the progress we've made in expanding broadband access for Latino communities and would eliminate an effective tool to reach those still lacking connectivity. Therefore, we urge you to consider withdrawing the current proposal from circulation. The mere existence of this rulemaking creates market uncertainty, causing delays and disruptions in the formation of permissible bulk billing agreements. Ultimately, this hampers efforts to provide affordable or free broadband services to vulnerable communities.

We believe the FCC should prioritize addressing the actual barriers to closing the digital divide and focus on implementing effective solutions. We stand ready to collaborate with you in this crucial endeavor.

Thank you for the time, and we ask that our request would receive full and fair consideration consistent with agency guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ritchie Torres". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress