



*ensuring opportunity for all*

## **A Plan to Improve Broadband Access**

In today's world, your internet connection can determine your destiny. It shapes your access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has only driven this point home. Many students have switched to remote learning and employees have moved increasingly to teleworking. This makes a high-speed, reliable internet connection invaluable. Broadband is also quickly becoming vital as healthcare shifts more from traditional in-person visits to telehealth services. High-speed, high-quality broadband is simply a necessity.

However, too many New York families and small businesses lack access to affordable, fast, quality broadband, especially in rural areas. To make matters worse, upstate New York is subject to a virtual broadband monopoly. This has left many rural customers with nonexistent broadband service, or with service that is far too expensive. Instead of allowing Spectrum to dominate the market, we must allow other companies to expand into our region to provide quality and affordable coverage. A practical broadband monopoly prevents students from accessing educational opportunities, healthcare providers from fully serving their patients, and our local businesses from accessing new commercial possibilities in our increasingly digital economy.

I'm committed to supporting policies that increase competition and connectivity. Every New Yorker needs to have access to a robust marketplace of broadband options. In addition, we must lay the groundwork for new technologies, such as 5G, that promise connectivity for a lower cost. To accomplish these objectives, I am supporting a package of bills in Congress that will deliver real results if passed. My plan unleashes private sector innovation to foster competition and bring costs down while boosting resources for rural and underserved communities.

### **Unleashing the Private Sector**

- **Original Cosponsor of H.R. 3377, the Gigabit Opportunity (GO) Act:** This legislation will create broadband opportunity zones in areas lacking sufficient internet access, encouraging smaller internet providers to improve and expand their internet offerings. Ultimately, this bill will bring more internet service providers to upstate New York to compete against Spectrum's monopoly, resulting in lower costs and faster service.
- **Cosponsored H.R. 1032, the Telecommunications Skilled Workforce Act:** This bipartisan legislation will help close the workforce shortage in the telecommunications industry and ensure we have the skilled workforce needed to build and maintain 5G networks in underserved communities. Emerging technologies like 5G would offer service that is better, faster, cheaper, and reaches farther than traditional technologies; we need to make sure we have the workforce in place to take full advantage of it.

## **Boosting Competition**

- **Bringing Greater Competition to New York:** I have urged the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to immediately re-evaluate the non-competitive telecommunications market in upstate New York. Since the New York State's Public Service Commission and the FCC granted Spectrum a virtual monopoly, it has saddled our communities with expensive and unreliable broadband. The FCC must act immediately to bring competitors into upstate New York, giving our communities a robust broadband marketplace of choices that expands access and brings prices down.

## **Increasing Resources for Underserved Communities**

- **Cosponsored H.R. 3435, the American Broadband Act:** This legislation will authorize \$20 billion over five years to expand broadband infrastructure in underserved communities and \$3 billion to promote rural wireless infrastructure, while eliminating the waste in the Biden Administration's current infrastructure proposal. The money will be prioritized for projects offering 100Mbps download speeds so our rural communities will not be stuck with second class internet access. In addition, the bill will cut red tape for cable providers entering new markets or upgrading their network, encouraging a robust broadband marketplace that keeps prices lower and speeds higher.
- **Cosponsored H.R. 2400, the Community Broadband Mapping Act:** This bipartisan legislation will allow local communities to dispute and correct inaccuracies in Federal Communications Commission (FCC) internet service status claims. These federal broadband maps are often chronically inaccurate, meaning that many of our local communities are ineligible for funds they would otherwise receive. This fix is necessary to close gaps in broadband service and ensure every community receives resources.
- **Support Funding for USDA ReConnect Program:** I recently testified before the House Appropriations Committee to urge it to continue funding rural broadband expansions through the USDA ReConnect Program and to reform the program to make sure it works for all rural communities. It is fundamental that we boost internet infrastructure that can host multiple internet service providers, so rural communities can access greater broadband options at lower prices. We must also consider raising the federal definition of minimum internet service beyond its already scheduled increase to 25 megabits per second. This standard is simply not high enough to meet the demands of many communities, especially for our schools, healthcare facilities, and libraries.

Having access to fast, reliable, and affordable broadband is vital to the success of our communities in New York's 22nd Congressional District. If our region is going to grow and thrive in a 21st century economy, we need 21st century tools. It is vitally important that we come together as a nation and work to provide concrete solutions for our digitally underserved communities. Your views are always important to me. Please write to me on my website or call my office at 202-225-3665 with feedback, questions, or concerns.