ACCESS BROADBAND

Background:

Broadband is essential to how we communicate, exchange information, conduct business and engage in the democratic process.

From young children working on school assignments to college students studying for exams to adults working from home or running a small business, easy and affordable Internet access has become an integral part of our daily lives.

- Approximately 12 percent of U.S. schools lack the connectivity to meet the short-term goal of 100 Mbps per 1,000 students/staff.

- Approximately 7% of Americans lack access to fixed 25 Mbps/3 Mbps broadband.

- 28 percent of rural Americans lack access to 25 Mbps/3 Mbps.

<u>**The ACCESS BROADBAND Act:**</u>
Advancing Critical Connectivity Expands Service, Small Business
Resources, Opportunities, Access and Data Based on Assessed
Need and Demand

- **The ACCESS BROADBAND Act** would establish an office of Internet Connectivity and Growth at NTIA. Currently, **there is <u>no comprehensive system</u> that tracks where federal dollars are going** and how the funding is impacting communities. NTIA already has the resources and staff to do this but has not been charged with coordinating and tracking federal funding for broadband across agencies.

- Many communities and small businesses are not applying for available funding because the process can be tedious and costly. **The ACCESS BROADBAND Act** assigns the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth to simplify access for small businesses and local communities so they are better able to leverage available federal resources. The office could also host small business workshops and other support to communities looking for assistance.

- A small business or community that wants to apply for federal funding to expand broadband faces a complex maze of agencies and initiatives with separate and often labor-intensive processes. **The ACCESS BROADBAND Act** would streamline the process and provide better coordination across government and the private sector to get more local business communities online and up to speed.