



Attorney General Doug Peterson

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 23, 2021

Attorney General Peterson joins 30 attorneys general in urging the FCC to provide E-Rate funds for remote learning during the pandemic

LINCOLN, NE — Attorney General Doug Peterson today joined 30 attorneys general on a letter urging the Federal Communications Commission to fund internet connectivity and internet-enabled devices to 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 asked for comment on petitions urging the commission to temporarily waive some restrictions on its E-Rate program to allow schools to extend their broadband internet networks to students' homes and to allow E-Rate funds to support Wi-Fi hotspots or other broadband connections for students who lack adequate internet connectivity to participate in remote schooling.

The E-Rate program provides funding from funds already set aside to better connect schools and libraries in all parts of the nation—urban, suburban and rural. Now, all parts of the nation are struggling with the best means to educating K-12 students during the waves of a pandemic.

“In Nebraska, we have unique challenges with adequate broad band coverage, particularly for school students in rural Nebraska who may need to access the classroom through their internet capabilities,” stated Attorney General Peterson. “Hopefully, the FCC can help alleviate these limitations as the consider new rules and regulations.”

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, the living room, bedroom, or basement becomes the classroom and deserves the same E-Rate support.

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 schooling, if allowed by the FCC.

Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser and Nebraska Attorney General Doug Peterson are leading this effort, and are joined by the attorneys general from Alaska, Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

###

Letter attached.

Suzanne Gage
Director of Communications
Nebraska Attorney General
Office: 402.471.2656
Mobile: 402.560.3518
Suzanne.gage@nebraska.gov

