

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN WORKSHOP
LESSONS FOR THE NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN FROM LOCAL
OFFICIALS REPRESENTING UNDER-SERVED COMMUNITIES

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, December 9, 2009

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
706 Duke Street, Suite 100
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190
www.andersonreporting.net

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Panelist Presentations:

3 CALVIN SMYRE
4 President of the National Black Caucus of State
Legislators, Georgia State Representative

5 ROBERT STEELE
6 Commissioner, 2nd District of Cook County
(Chicago), IL

7 VANESSA R. WILLIAMS
8 Executive Director of the National Conference of
Black Mayors (NCBM)

9 GUS K. WEST
10 Board Chair and President, The Hispanic Institutes

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (9:40 a.m.)

3 MR. LLOYD: Good morning. It is, I
4 think, almost 9:40, which means that we're 10
5 minutes late for a relatively short program, but
6 we're going to get started here and catch up very
7 quickly. We have at least a full morning and
8 perhaps more and different participants than we
9 anticipated, but why don't we get started?

10 My name is Mark Lloyd and please welcome
11 to -- I think Krista will correct me, but I think
12 this is like the 1 millionth and 12th Broadband
13 Workshop Panel that we've had here. This is
14 "Lessons for the National Broadband Plan from
15 Local Officials Representing Underserved
16 Communities," just to make sure that everyone --
17 like flights, you know that you're on the right
18 ship and we're going to wind up around noon or so.

19 We have three commissioners, which is
20 actually very -- quite unusual for these panels,
21 who are going to make very brief opening
22 statements to get us started off. And then I'll

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1 make a brief statement and then we will begin the
2 program in earnest and I'll introduce the support
3 and myself more properly. And we can get started.

4 And so, let me introduce Commissioner
5 Michael Copps, who has been, I think, a very
6 stalwart supporter in trying to make sure that all
7 voices are heard as the FCC considers what really
8 ought to be in a National Broadband Plan that
9 we're supposed to deliver to Congress, I think, 70
10 days from now. And with that, let me introduce
11 FCC Commissioner Michael Copps.

12 MR. COPPS: Thank you, Mark. Good
13 morning to everybody. Welcome to the 1 millionth
14 and 12th workshop. We appreciate your being here,
15 appreciate our distinguished panelists. I think
16 some folks have been caught up in the ravages of
17 rainy weather, traffic in Washington, but they'll
18 be coming in and I guess there's some people out
19 there in the virtual world who are listening in,
20 too, so that's wonderful.

21 As most of you know, we are in the midst
22 of probably the most far-reaching effort that this

1 Commission has ever undertaken: To craft that
2 broadband plan for all Americans between now and
3 February 12th. We've still got a long way to go,
4 but these workshops have been very helpful to us
5 and I think to the country generally. They've
6 been educational. I think more and more Americans
7 are beginning to understand that broadband isn't
8 just about some super duper technology or some
9 techno-geek kind of application, but it's really
10 central to all of the problems facing our country
11 whether it's jobs, economy, energy, health care,
12 climate change -- none of those problems has a
13 solution that isn't, in part at least,
14 broadband-related, so it's really important.

15 And it's really important, I think, to
16 opening the doors of equal opportunity in this
17 country of ours. The good news is that it can do
18 so much to open those doors of opportunity, but if
19 we don't get it right, it can actually end up
20 making the present gaps that we have in this
21 country even worse. So it is really hugely
22 important that we get this right and benefit from

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1 your advice and your counsel so we can begin to
2 overcome generations of derelict policy and lost
3 opportunities.

4 So, one of the tests, really, of whether
5 we have a viable broadband plan will be how it
6 affects our diversity communities, how it affects
7 our minorities, does it really work, and that
8 means not just getting the technology out and
9 available to all of the communities in our
10 country, but helping folks understand the
11 importance of it and convincing them that they
12 need to adopt this.

13 And it also means minorities
14 participating in the whole process, in the
15 construction of the infrastructure. There's a
16 rightful place there, obviously, for the
17 creativity and knowledge that our diversity
18 communities can bring. So, this is just -- I
19 could go on and on on this, but it's just hugely
20 important in so many ways.

21 It's important, too, I think, just to
22 our -- this is about digital inclusion. Digital

1 inclusion includes our civic dialogue and how we
2 talk to one another and how we exchange news and
3 information, and broadband is going to become the
4 primary way to do this. So, you know, you all
5 know broadcast is important to you, traditional
6 media, old media. New media is going to be
7 vitally important, too, and we've got to make sure
8 that we don't visit some of the sins on new media
9 that bad policy has visited upon old media in
10 recent years.

11 So, we've got a lot to do. I'm
12 delighted that you're here to help. I'm glad to
13 see a lot of friends here and I hope others are
14 listening and I look forward to your
15 presentations. Thank you.

16 Let me introduce now my friend and
17 colleague Rob McDowell. Rob has been to many of
18 these workshops. He has toiled long and hard in
19 trying to open up the doors of entrepreneurial
20 activity and economic opportunity, and his
21 presence here is further testimony of his
22 commitment to that good cause.

1 MR. McDOWELL: Thank you, Commissioner,
2 for that very generous introduction and for
3 reading it just the way I wrote it for you. I
4 appreciate that.

5 Good morning. How's everybody? It's a
6 sleepy, rainy morning, but this is a very, very
7 important topic that's not sleepy at all.

8 So, I've served, before I got the
9 Commission, in various capacities, on boards, in
10 commissions at the state and local level, county
11 level, community level. I have a brother who's a
12 mayor. He's the mayor of El Segundo, California.
13 In California they say El Segundo. But El Segundo
14 for (Spanish). Buenos dias y bienvenido.

15 But this is a very, very important
16 issue. I think one of the things we can all take
17 away is it doesn't really matter what jurisdiction
18 folks live in, that there are underserved
19 communities in every single jurisdiction in
20 America. And hopefully, today we'll explore a
21 little bit more about that.

22 And by the way, Mark, thank you very

1 much for putting this together and for moderating
2 it and what a great team you've got here.

3 So, a lot of this boils down to -- I'll
4 keep this very brief -- a lot of this boils down
5 to supply and demand. If we have enough supply of
6 robust broadband technologies, innovation will go
7 up, prices will go down, and, therefore,
8 subscribership and penetration will go up,
9 adoption will go up.

10 But what can we do on both sides of the
11 supply and demand equation? We certainly -- if
12 you're an entrepreneur, small business owner or
13 wannabe, you need access to capital and that
14 doesn't matter if it's radio, television, or the
15 Internet, and that is the number one obstacle
16 facing any entrepreneur regardless of what
17 community it may come from. So, we've been
18 exploring, as part of our broadband plan,
19 investigation. Maybe that was the 1 millionth and
20 2nd workshop we did and several, actually -- was
21 on access to capital for companies of all sizes
22 and for men and women of ambition of all stages of

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1 development in their business plans.

2 So, we all need to make sure we work
3 towards the ubiquity of fatter and faster pipes
4 for all and that should spark a virtual, virtuous
5 cycle.

6 Then on the demand side, I think we all
7 need to look at what can we do to increase
8 adoption, and certainly education is a big part of
9 that. There's still a significant percentage of
10 people out there who think that they don't need a
11 broadband technology, and we need to change that
12 mindset because it really is a technology that not
13 only has penetrated faster than almost any
14 technology in the history of humankind, but has
15 really helped improve the human condition almost
16 more quickly than any other technology.

17 So, we can, I think, look at a lot of
18 programs and ideas that will help spur adoption.
19 What can we do at the FCC to make it easier for
20 folks to pull video content through the Internet
21 directly to their TV set? And there are a lot of
22 products out there already that address this. But

1 what can we do maybe to make that easier for
2 consumers and less complicated so you don't have
3 to be a techno-geek, as my distinguished colleague
4 has said, to wire up your TV to your computer or
5 whatever the case might be? So, I think,
6 hopefully, we'll be exploring those opportunities
7 as well.

8 What can we do to help stimulate
9 telecommuting? Can we give -- allow businesses to
10 expense the capital expenditures for a computer
11 and also give them a tax incentive to help foster
12 broadband connections at home for their employees?
13 George Mason has several studies -- George Mason
14 University -- that shows that actually worker
15 productivity increases, family life satisfaction
16 increases, the cost to employers decreases,
17 there's less office space rent, for instance, they
18 have to pay for that employee, everyone's happier,
19 it's win-win. But you have to change the paradigm
20 where employers feel the need to see their
21 employee working.

22 Now, of course, telecommuting doesn't

1 work for all professions. If you're a surgeon,
2 you've got to be there at work. You know, if
3 you're a waitress, you've got to be there at work.
4 But there are a lot of professions where it can
5 help and it's also environmentally friendly, it
6 gets cars off the road. It means fewer tax
7 dollars have to be spent building roads, et
8 cetera, et cetera, but it affects many, many
9 things. But it also would help spur demand, which
10 would give an economic incentive to build fatter
11 and faster pipes.

12 So, anyway, we'll be looking at all
13 these issues in the course of our broadband plan
14 and we look forward to working with not only the
15 people here on this panel today, but throughout
16 the country. This is going to be an ongoing
17 iterative process, as I've said many times. We're
18 not going to come out with some plan that's carved
19 in stone, that's going to be static for years to
20 come. It's going to be fluid and changing and it
21 should be because economic circumstances are going
22 to change. There's going to be new technologies

1 announced, probably, you know, February 18th, the
2 day after the plan is due to Congress, that might
3 change the whole game plan. So, we look forward
4 to working with you as partners as we go forward.

5 So, without further ado, I want to
6 introduce my distinguished colleague from South
7 Caroline who has an incredible record of public
8 service down there, public sector as well as
9 private sector, and brings a wonderfully unique
10 perspective to the Commission, the Honorable
11 Mignon Clyburn. Thank you.

12 MR. CLYBURN: Thank you. I know you're
13 tired, so that applause was -- that's all right,
14 I'm okay. I'm secure. I'm secure.

15 Good morning, everyone. This room
16 represents the powers that be, the powers that it
17 would need to make a difference as it relates to
18 this particular topic. Mrs. Frasier, from
19 Representative Townsend's office; we've got
20 federal commissioners and those staff persons at
21 the FCC, including my good friend Mark Lloyd, who
22 deeply care about what we're speaking about today

1 in terms of serving underserved and other
2 challenged communities. And mayors and represents
3 of -- state representatives are here this morning
4 who recognize that something that -- it took me a
5 while to recognize, that no man is an island.
6 It's going to take all of these forces, all of us,
7 to realize and recognize and help uplift
8 communities that are challenged.

9 When I go home -- when we had our
10 broadband conference in South Carolina, one thing
11 -- it reminded me of a story that a lady once told
12 me. I was doing some volunteer work in Charleston
13 and I was frustrated at the end of the day because
14 we had this incredible health conference and very
15 few people attended. We had a free screening, you
16 know, just opportunities to, you know, get a
17 better handle on your present health status. And
18 I know the community in which we were housing this
19 event, there were a whole host of people who
20 probably hadn't been to the doctor in years. And
21 I was just wondering why. You know, we put forth
22 this effort, we got this here, it's free. Why did

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1 the people stay home? It's because there was a
2 disconnect between our good will and those persons
3 feeling that they were a part, feeling that they
4 could connect with us. There was a disconnect
5 between the people who we care so much about that
6 we wanted to serve, and that's what we have here.
7 That's what we're faced here.

8 This focus on un-served and underserved
9 communities and with these panelists who represent
10 right where the people are, this presents us with
11 an opportunity to get this right. That that
12 disconnect that I experienced in my early twenties
13 about wanting to do good for the community that
14 did not know me from anything -- you know, why
15 should they trust me?

16 We've got people here, if we do it
17 right, if we do it in concert, if we recognize
18 that the federal government does certain things
19 right, the state government, they do certain
20 things right, and the local government -- I'll go
21 ahead and say it -- they do everything right, that
22 if we recognize where our strengths are, where our

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1 abilities are, and recognize that no man is an
2 island, that it's going to take all of us to
3 uplift all of us, then indeed we have an
4 opportunity to get it right.

5 I want to be a part of getting it right.
6 We have an incredible opportunity to close these
7 gaps, to un-widen these canyons that currently
8 exist in our communities. We've got an incredible
9 opportunity to do it right and we are starting,
10 continuing now, with including all of the persons
11 from the various sectors who know how to do things
12 right in their islands, so to speak. And if we
13 continue this dialogue, if we continuing moving
14 along this path, if we continue to recognize
15 everyone's strength, then indeed we will get this
16 right. Thank you for being a part of getting this
17 right.

18 MR. LLOYD: So, let me start out, again,
19 by thanking all of the commissioners for coming
20 in. There are probably fewer than 100 Americans
21 who've really had the opportunity to vote on
22 communications policy in the United States over

1 the course of the history of communications policy
2 in the United States, only five commissioners,
3 roughly, at a time. We've had more or less over
4 the years, but roughly fewer than 100 who've ever
5 had a vote and you've just heard from three people
6 who have a vote in the U.S. About communications
7 policy.

8 I do not have a vote. I am simply sort
9 of second level, third tier staffer without a
10 window here at the Federal Communications
11 Commission. My title is associate general
12 counsel. I think we did a panel before with
13 general counsel sort of splayed down below me and
14 my boss (inaudible) wasn't too happy about that.
15 It was okay.

16 I'm just an associate general counsel
17 and chief diversity officer here. My focus is
18 really on working across the Commission to make
19 sure that I can provide whatever support is
20 necessary to advance the issues or interest of
21 diversity here at the Federal Communications
22 Commission.

1 This, in many ways, is a follow-up to a
2 panel that was really very ably moderated and
3 coordinated by Lauren Kravitz on state and local
4 governments toolkits and best practices. There
5 were a number of folks who really felt that there
6 was some perspective, particularly about the needs
7 of underserved and un-served communities and that
8 there was more conversation needed to follow up
9 that earlier panel that occurred on September 1st.
10 So in many ways this is a follow- up to that
11 panel.

12 As Commissioner Clyburn has said very
13 ably, what we really hope to hear today is from
14 folks who aren't in Washington, who are in touch
15 with what is going on in local communities, who
16 know, understand, share the challenges that those
17 communities face regarding broadband adoption and
18 access and what works, most importantly.

19 This is a listening session for those of
20 us here at the Federal Communications Commission.
21 We have, you know, pulled together really a
22 tremendous body of work trying to hear from the

1 public about what we need to do to suggest to
2 Congress what ought to be our National Broadband
3 Plan. And so we really do hope to also, in
4 addition to our panelists, hear from you in the
5 audience and from those who are at work or at home
6 who are participating via Internet. And we have
7 really a tremendous amount of staff support from
8 the Office of Communications and Business
9 Opportunities.

10 Gilberto DeJesus is here. Gil, are you
11 -- okay, so if you could just sort of identify
12 yourself, and Gil will help. If you have
13 questions to ask, please write those questions
14 down on cards and Gil will be more than happy to
15 take those questions up and bring them to me.

16 Christian Fiasconali is here and he is
17 our online coordinator. Again, will be helping
18 to, again, make sure that we've got questions from
19 the public to present to the panelists.

20 And the person who's sort of going to
21 make sure that we actually stay on time -- tough
22 job, John -- John Finney, who's going to be our

1 time, who's helping us out. So, we have able
2 support from the commissioners and their staffers
3 to folks who really sort of helped this on.

4 And I could not go on without mentioning
5 David Honig, who really, in a great degree, is an
6 engine behind this. David was here somewhere. I
7 don't know where he might have disappeared to.
8 So, thank you, again, David, for all your help and
9 support in helping to pull this panel together.

10 We hope to wrap up around noon, no later
11 than noon today. We have, I think, a full set of
12 bios both online and on the table up front here
13 for those of you in the audience. We have a
14 couple of folks who may be delayed because of the
15 rain who will be joining us, and we have a new
16 participant who may be here instead of one, but
17 we'll get to those introductions a little bit
18 later on.

19 We're going to start with Calvin Smyre,
20 president of the National Black Caucus of State
21 Legislators. Representative Smyre is a
22 businessman. He is a foundation leader. He is

1 recognized, I think, across the country by state
2 legislators as one of the leaders in his area. A
3 Georgia state representative, executive vice
4 president, Corporate External Affairs of Synovus.
5 Do I have that correctly? And president of the
6 Synovus Foundation.

7 He was elected to the Georgia House of
8 Representatives in 1974 as its youngest member at
9 age 26. He's just a few years older than that
10 now. He is the president of the National Black
11 Caucus of State Legislators and a member of the
12 Assembly on State Issues of the National
13 Conference of State Legislators. I am not doing
14 his biography justice by just letting you know
15 that. Again, much more information about
16 Representative Smyre online and on the table, but
17 let's see if we can get to the program and start
18 with Mr. Smyre.

19 Thank you, sir.

20 MR. SMYRE: Thank you very much. It's a
21 pleasure for me to be here and I want to thank
22 Mark Lloyd, who I met doing a diversity meeting

1 here several weeks ago, and it's a delight to be
2 back at the FCC.

3 And I want to personally thank the
4 commissioners that were present here today and
5 that are still here. All that I have met and have
6 worked with and I'm delighted that they have been
7 receptive and accessible to us as state
8 legislators and Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner
9 Copps, and Commissioner McDowell, whom I've all
10 met and had an opportunity to talk with. So, it's
11 a real situation and when we produced our
12 broadband imperative from the black state
13 legislators and elected legislative women and
14 black mayors and local elected official and black
15 county officials, we were here for two days and
16 you all were very receptive in that regard and in
17 our rollout. So we do have a working relationship
18 with the Federal Communications Commission. And
19 as president of the National Black Caucus of State
20 Legislators, on behalf of all of our members, I
21 want to take this opportunity to thank you and I
22 listen very intently to what you all were saying

1 in your introductory remarks. And Commissioner
2 Clyburn, I couldn't agree with you more that being
3 a part and getting it right sort of sums it up in
4 all aspects.

5 So, we at NBCSL want to be a part of
6 getting it right and with you and Commissioner
7 Copps and all the other members of the FCC, I have
8 followed you all as it relates to -- especially to
9 Commissioner Copps -- as it relates to his
10 commitment to the various diverse communities
11 throughout America and I'm looking forward to
12 working with both of you all.

13 Why don't you all give the FCC a round
14 of applause and thank them for -- (applause). So
15 I'm delighted to be here and it's a privilege for
16 me to come and I want to thank Mark Lloyd again
17 for putting and bringing all of us together to
18 talk about the broadband plan from local elected
19 officials representing underserved communities.

20 As state legislators -- and I represent
21 625 legislators representing 42 states, and I hope
22 that we will continue to play a vital role in

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1 ensuring the successful implementation of the
2 National Broadband Plan, particularly with respect
3 to our ability to understand the needs and protect
4 the interests of our most vulnerable communities,
5 those populated by low-income, rural, minority,
6 and underserved people.

7 We are well aware of the profound impact
8 that increased broadband use will have on
9 minimizing and eradicating the social and economic
10 disparities that have long plagued our communities
11 and our country. It is because of this impact
12 that I am here today.

13 NBCSL stands ready to take an active
14 seat at the table in ensuring America's broadband
15 future. We want to make sure that President Obama
16 is successful in his goal of achieving 100 percent
17 broadband adoption and use and that the Federal
18 Communication Commission has the tools and
19 partners it needs to accomplish this goal.

20 At NBCSL we recognize that
21 African-Americans are the farthest behind any
22 other ethnic group with respect to home broadband

1 adoption and use with only 46 percent of
2 African-Americans subscribing to broadband in the
3 home. We can play a critical role in discerning
4 the hows and the whys behind this missed
5 opportunity. We are likewise poised to identify
6 new opportunities to leverage the high wireless
7 adoption rate among African-Americans as a mean of
8 spurring increased broadband adoption in our
9 communities.

10 While no one has yet been able to
11 completely explain why we are early adaptors of
12 wireless technologies, we are prepared to dig deep
13 into the trenches of our communities to better
14 understand the option dichotomy we now face all in
15 an effort to guaranty 100 percent broadband
16 adoption and use by low-income minority and
17 underserved populations.

18 In this same vein, we as state
19 legislators, have an invaluable role to play in
20 ensuring the successful implementation of a
21 properly developed National Broadband Plan,
22 especially where the plan is intended to reflect

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1 the interest of low-income and underserved
2 individuals. An effective plan must be developed
3 with practical implementations in mind. It cannot
4 be abstract, in our opinion. Consequently, the
5 only way to be successful in this effort is to
6 engage those closest to the people who would be
7 implementing the plan at the front end, that is
8 state and local elected officials.

9 NBCSL applauds the FCC for recognizing
10 the importance of assembling grass-root and
11 grass-top support in coordinating the National
12 Broadband Plan and we thank you for holding this
13 hearing today.

14 In closing, we want to acknowledge and
15 continue to support the FCC's Intergovernmental
16 Advisory Committee. We applaud the recent
17 reauthorization of the IAC and the expansion of
18 its charter. With about 70 days remaining until
19 the release of the National Broadband Plan, it
20 would seem that the reengagement of the IAC to
21 address issues such as adoption of the Broadband
22 Plan, and implementation of expanding broadband

1 adoption and deployment, especially in un-served
2 and underserved rural areas and tribal lands, is a
3 part and parcel of fundamental questions that must
4 be asked.

5 We ask that you continue to use the IAC
6 as a vehicle by -- through which the FCC will
7 communicate and work with city, county, and state
8 governments. And we recommend -- and we commend
9 you for your vision and desire to speak on the
10 variety of issues as it relates to the
11 implementation of broadband.

12 We thank you for allowing NBCSL. I
13 would ask that my entire remarks be included in
14 the record, but I want to thank the FCC for
15 allowing us to come today to participate in this
16 dialogue on broadband adoption in the underserved
17 communities of our nation. And we're looking
18 forward to working with you as partners in this
19 endeavor. Thank you.

20 MR. LLOYD: Representative Smyre, thank
21 you very much.

22 Next we're going to turn to Gus West,

1 who is the board chair and president of the
2 Hispanic Institute. The Hispanic Institute is a
3 nonprofit organization serving as an educational
4 forum for an informed and empowered Hispanic
5 America. The Hispanic Institute manages several
6 ongoing projects including the study of Hispanic
7 economic conditions, media monitoring, consumer
8 fraud protection, citizen education and technology
9 and telecommunications research. And again, a
10 full bio is online.

11 And I think with that, Mr. West.

12 MR. WEST: Thank you, Mr. Lloyd. On
13 behalf of the Board of Directors of the Hispanic
14 Institute, I would like to thank the Federal
15 Communications Commission for inviting us to be a
16 part of today's panel, particularly Commissioner
17 Cops and Commissioner Clyburn, who, I believe,
18 has left, and -- oh, excuse me. And Mr. Lloyd,
19 thank you.

20 I would like to read from a preface of a
21 joint statement that was issued this past weekend
22 by several of the largest caucuses of state

1 legislators. This statement was coauthored by the
2 Hispanic Institute and was issued during the
3 National Black Caucus of State Legislators meeting
4 in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. I need to say at this
5 point that this was the work of Representative
6 Smyre. He brought together all these caucuses,
7 first of all, got them together to issue a joint
8 statement, and then brought the leadership of
9 those caucuses down to Ft. Lauderdale, Florida,
10 this past weekend. That's a feat in itself, so
11 it's his credit and I'm just a messenger in this.

12 "The National Asian-Pacific American
13 Caucus of State Legislators, National Black Caucus
14 of State Legislators, National Caucus of Native
15 American State Legislators, the National Hispanic
16 Caucus of State Legislators issue this Joint
17 Policy Statement in recognition of the important
18 role that broadband plays in all of our lives. We
19 firmly believe that ubiquitous broadband access,
20 adoption, and use, stand to be great equalizers in
21 our society. As such, we must ensure that
22 Internet adoption and use via a broadband

1 connection becomes engrained as a social, cultural
2 norm in our communities. We believe this will
3 amplify our ability to improve economic outcomes,
4 increase educational opportunities, render quality
5 health care both more accessible and affordable,
6 and yield new avenues for provisions of better
7 public safety and provide tools that lead to a
8 cleaner environment.

9 "For our organizations and most
10 significantly, for the communities of the people
11 we represent, the broadband status quo is
12 unacceptable. While our constituents all have
13 unique needs, we recognize that absent digital
14 equality and broadband opportunities, our
15 communities, particularly those populated by
16 low-income, non-English-speaking, rural, tribal,
17 or otherwise underserved populations will be
18 unable to fully engage in the increasingly global
19 innovation economy. Because universal broadband
20 access and adoption are paramount to the success
21 of our communities and this country, towards
22 access, adoption, and inclusion, a call for

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1 digital equality and broadband opportunity sets
2 forth our top tier, mutually agreed upon policy
3 recommendations as prospective aids to federal
4 lawmakers, regulatory bodies, and state and local
5 elected officials, as we all endeavor to create
6 and implement new opportunities for increased
7 broadband adoption and digital inclusion.

8 "We set forth principles of progress we
9 believe will better enable us to identify the
10 presence and ramifications of the digital divide
11 within African-American, Hispanic, Native
12 American, and Asian-Pacific Islander communities,
13 ensure that broadband connectivity is available,
14 accessible, and affordable for every American
15 regardless of geographical or social economic
16 situation. Incent broadband adoption and use by
17 increasing its cultural value and social worth,
18 and foster investment in, and a robust use of high
19 speed broadband Internet service to increase job
20 creation and economic activity. We realize the
21 power of broadband. We coalesce around our
22 collective interests, for our communities and our

1 country we must guaranty broadband access,
2 adoption, and inclusion to secure America's
3 future."

4 A full statement can be accessed on the
5 Hispanic Institute's website,
6 thehispanicinstitute.org, and I would ask that
7 that full statement be included in the record of
8 today. Thank you, Mr. Lloyd.

9 MR. LLOYD: Thank you, Mr. West. We are
10 going to turn now to Mayor Eugene Grant of the
11 city of Seat Pleasant, Maryland. He is also a
12 member of the National Conference of Black Mayors.
13 And I think in the program, in the announcement,
14 we had indicated that we would be joined by
15 Vanessa Williams, but I understand that Mayor
16 Grant is going to be here and present the position
17 of the National Conference instead. So, thank you
18 for joining us at this late date.

19 MR. GRANT: Thank you, Mr. Lloyd. We
20 appreciate your hosting of this. We also
21 acknowledge the presence of the FCC commissioners
22 and we thank them for being here. We are

1 delighted, on behalf of the National Conference of
2 Black Mayors, for which I am its first vice
3 president, as well as president of the Maryland
4 chapter of the National Conference of Black
5 Mayors, speaking on their behalf as well, and we
6 ask that our full remarks be included into the
7 record this morning.

8 Again, good morning, and on behalf of
9 the National Conference of Black Mayors, we thank
10 you for the opportunity to participate in today's
11 event. As the first vice president of an
12 organization representing 650 African-American
13 mayors nationwide who are responsible for the
14 governance of more than 48 million people here in
15 the United States, it is my pleasure to speak with
16 you today about the importance of broadband access
17 and adoption to our communities.

18 Historically, the communities we
19 represent have contained high numbers of
20 low-income, rural, minority, and underserved
21 people. All too often, the members of these
22 communities have been unable to participate in

1 vibrant social economic life because they lack
2 access to the essential resources they so
3 desperately need. Today, with broadband access
4 and adoption becoming an ever present necessity in
5 our society, we can no longer afford to allow the
6 vulnerable members of our communities to lag
7 behind. We must ensure that they are given
8 adequate opportunities to access and use
9 broadband, the most critical infrastructure of our
10 day. It is, therefore, incumbent upon us as
11 leaders at all levels, especially local officials,
12 who have daily access to the people to ensure that
13 our communities are able to participate in a
14 digital society and reap the benefits of broadband
15 access and innovation.

16 Broadband access means better
17 educational and economic development
18 opportunities. It means higher quality and more
19 affordable health care services. Access alone,
20 however, is not enough and we must engage our
21 citizenry through the culturally relevant content
22 and affordable access opportunities to ensure

1 broadband adopts in use in underserved
2 communities.

3 With the enactment of the American
4 Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Commission is
5 required to establish a plan for use of broadband
6 infrastructure and services in advancing community
7 development, worker training, private sector
8 investment, entrepreneurial activity, job
9 creation, and economic growth. Municipal
10 governments, such as those run by the National
11 Conference of Black Mayor's members, on whose
12 behalf I appear today, play a critical role in
13 ensuring the proper execution and implementation
14 of any National Broadband Plan contemplated by the
15 Federal Communications Commission or any other
16 branch of our federal government. Mayors, city
17 and county commissioners, and all other officers
18 of local government, have the most direct access
19 to the American people, particularly those living
20 in underserved communities. Therefore, these
21 local elected officials are in the best position
22 to access the needs of the people and implement

1 proactive solutions that immediately speak to
2 those needs.

3 In the case of broadband access and
4 adoption, municipal governments are perhaps in the
5 best position to engage in broadband mapping
6 activities that help ascertain the connected and
7 unconnected in their communities. Likewise,
8 municipal governments can easily define areas in
9 need of the most improvement in their communities
10 and can, therefore, define broadband opportunities
11 in a way that state and federal governments
12 cannot.

13 One example comes to mind to the
14 National Conference of Black Mayors when we
15 consider the import and impact of municipal
16 governments on creating new opportunities for
17 broadband access, adoption, and use. Under the
18 leadership of city commissioner and mayor pro temp
19 of Tallahassee, Florida, Digital Harmony is a
20 collaborative partnership pilot program designed
21 by the city of Tallahassee and others to expand
22 Internet access to underserved parts of the

1 community.

2 This program, in its third year of
3 operation at NIMS Middle School in Leon County,
4 Florida, addresses the socioeconomic gaps created
5 by the digital divide by providing rising sixth
6 graders from economically and economically
7 challenged communities with home access to a
8 computer an online academic curriculum, Internet
9 access, digital literacy training, and mentoring
10 and support. In year one, approximately 100 homes
11 received computers. There was a 50 percent
12 increase in program participants in year 2. And
13 in year 3, an additional 240 students have taken
14 part in the program. NIMS was chosen for this
15 pilot program because it ranked as "F" in schools.
16 Since the program's inception, however, the
17 participating students have seen an increase in
18 academic achievement and performance, and a
19 decrease in behavioral problems, and the school
20 has increased its ranking from an "F" to a "C" in
21 a matter of two years. Now it's examples just
22 like these that need to be replicated and pursued

1 nationwide as a means of enhancing educational and
2 economic opportunity in underserved communities.

3 The students who complete the three-year
4 Digital Harmony pilot program are expected to go
5 onto college and pursue greater career
6 opportunities. This is how we empower
7 communities. This is how we change lives. This
8 is the power of municipal governments at work for
9 the people we serve daily.

10 Sadly, while programs like this may
11 exist in other parts of the country, access to
12 information about them is few and far between.
13 Either information does not exist or it is
14 impossible to find because there is no national
15 database describing such program resources. Going
16 forward, our National Broadband Plan must include
17 opportunities for a dedicated focus on identifying
18 and scaling programs like the Digital Harmony
19 Initiative. Municipal governments can be very
20 helpful in this task. As front-line advocates of
21 America's underserved, municipal governments can
22 readily identify the problems that need to be

1 solved. We are experts at dealing with the health
2 care disparities, education gaps, social and
3 economic injustice. We can tell you what we need.
4 We can provide baseline information and are
5 looking to you, the Federal Communications
6 Commission, to work with us to create the
7 solutions.

8 We need each other. Your technical
9 expertise coupled with our knowledge of our
10 communities is the only way to guarantee success
11 in achieving 100 percent broadband adoption by all
12 Americans particularly for those in underserved
13 communities. Together, we can solve the problems
14 that have plagued our communities thus far.

15 Thank you.

16 MR. LLOYD: Looking forward to more
17 conversation, particularly about the Digital
18 Harmony program that you raised. This is a really
19 great example. We're really looking for those
20 sorts of lessons. Thank you very much for that
21 presentation.

22 Commissioner Robert Steele has come out

1 of the rain, and I guess all of you have, so thank
2 you all for sort of participating. And we had a
3 horrible rain day here in Washington, D.C., which
4 occurs every now and then in the winter. So,
5 thank you for those, particularly those who have
6 come from outside of Washington, D.C.

7 Commissioner Robert Steele of the 2nd
8 District of Cook County, everyone knows, I think,
9 that's Chicago, Illinois. More than 30 years of
10 experience as a public servant in Chicago, and is
11 a results-driven County Board commissioner focused
12 on making meaningful and measurable contributions
13 to the residents of his district for all of Cook
14 County. Commissioner Steele is president of the
15 National Association of Black County Officials.

16 And so, again, thank you very much for
17 joining us here this morning. Looking forward to
18 your presentation.

19 MR. STEELE: Thank you very much. And
20 thank you for having me. To the Commission and to
21 the staff of the FCC, thank you for inviting us to
22 make some comments today around the Broadband

1 Initiative.

2 I join my colleagues from the Black
3 Mayor's Association and also from the state
4 legislature and those others that we partner
5 together along with the joint senator to prove our
6 case, so to speak.

7 I would like to thank FCC for inviting
8 me to speak at this workshop. I commend the
9 Commission for its work on this important venture
10 and I look forward to the outcome. As a
11 commissioner of the 2nd District of Cook County,
12 the second largest county in this country,
13 representing 5.3 million people, I am pleased to
14 share what broadband means to our residents'
15 quality of life. I have more than 30 years
16 experience serving as a public servant of Chicago
17 and Cook County. Nationally I serve as a member
18 of the National Association of County Officials,
19 which is over 900 counties that we represent of
20 the 3,200 counties in the United States.

21 As the president of the National Black
22 County Officials, I am really committed to this

1 program of broadband imperatives to make sure that
2 we are getting this nationally across the country.
3 It is my role as a public official and the
4 president of the National Association of Black
5 County Officials, I have witnessed the advantages
6 of brainstorming of sharing the best practices and
7 approaches among local officials to deal with the
8 common issues of local and national concern.

9 Of those issues affecting our
10 communities, connecting our nation and ensuring
11 economic opportunities for underserved
12 populations, should be our nation's top priority.
13 From a recent report from the Joint Center for
14 Political and Economic Studies, it says, "Without
15 access to broadband, marginalized groups are
16 ill-equipped to contribute to the nation's economy
17 and they increasingly face lives of diminished
18 opportunities."

19 With people of color projected to become
20 the majority of the U.S. population before the
21 mid-century, the rate at which poor minority
22 communities gain access to broadband have

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1 implications that go well beyond matters of simple
2 fairness and equality and into the realm of
3 strategic national importance.

4 Right now the nation is facing 10.2
5 unemployment rate and it's affecting minority
6 populations at a much higher rate. In October,
7 the unemployment rate for Hispanics was 13.1
8 percent and for African-Americans it was 15.7
9 percent.

10 Broadband technology is one key tool
11 communities can use to combat this trend. If we
12 utilize broadband technology access to educate
13 members of the minority community, we can better
14 equip our residents with skills needed to join our
15 workforce, reduce joblessness, and enable
16 communities to become more self sufficient. In
17 order for such initiatives to be successful,
18 members of underserved and underprivileged
19 communities must first recognize the need for the
20 vast benefits of broadband technology.

21 According to the 2009 PEW Home Broadband
22 Adoption study, while home-based broadband

1 adoption is growing among African-Americans, the
2 rate of growth has been slower when compared to
3 other segments and populations. Lack of interest,
4 price, availability, and usability were all cited
5 as reasons for not switching to broadband
6 services. With the current state of the economy,
7 the cost of adoption is likely to become even more
8 of a concern. Addressing the issue of cost with
9 subsidies similar of the Lifeline and Linkup
10 programs, which would be administered on a federal
11 level, but evaluated at a local level, could be
12 one solution.

13 However, one interesting finding from
14 the PEW research indicates that almost -- that
15 although minority populations were less likely to
16 us broadband in their homes, they were more likely
17 to use their phone to access the Internet than
18 other segments of the population. Understanding
19 the rationale behind the differences in usage
20 rates could prove helpful in developing strategies
21 increasing adoption of in-home broadband.

22 Additionally, while the PEW study does a

1 good job of reviewing the situation, it is
2 critical that we develop more in-depth research
3 into the reasons why minority populations lag
4 behind in the adoption rates so we can address
5 them with a more targeted approach.

6 As community leaders, it is critical and
7 crucial that we provide community-based solutions
8 that enable individuals to integrate advanced
9 communication technologies into their everyday
10 lives. This past September, the Joint Center for
11 Political and Economic Studies, and a number of
12 national organizations representing people of
13 color and their communities, released a report
14 outlining a series of recommendations that would
15 encourage broadband adoption.

16 Of these recommendations, some of the
17 key suggestions include establishing broadband in
18 public institutions like schools, libraries,
19 churches, and community centers, creating relevant
20 online content and opportunities for digital
21 literacy training helps members of the community
22 better understand and value broadband as an

1 essential service that can improve their lives.

2 Broadband efforts should focus on areas
3 of importance to minority consumers, including
4 education, health care, and employment. One
5 economist program called Digital Communities
6 provides a good example of how a public/private
7 sector partnership at the municipal level
8 implements these three suggestions. This fall,
9 the Bertie County School System and the Bertie
10 County Family Resource, in a partner with One
11 Economy, to create a curriculum for teens that
12 would teach these technical and life skills needed
13 to join the workforce. The session focused on
14 digital literacy and real-world experiences.

15 Chicago launched a variation of the
16 project in 2004, and is currently operating across
17 six different sites. The Center for Technology
18 and Learning did a study evaluating the success of
19 the digital communication program in two cities,
20 San Jose and Miami, and found that after a year in
21 the program, 82 to 86 of participants reported
22 using the Internet at home compared to 46 percent

1 of low-income households nationally.

2 Furthermore, after 1-1/2 years in the
3 program, 92 percent continue to have Internet
4 access in their homes with only 1/3 using the
5 pre-access offered by one economy, thus meaning
6 many households became self-supported users of
7 broadband. The success of these case studies
8 provides the helpful insight on how private/public
9 initiatives can be executed at a municipal level.

10 In a recent paper by Janice Haig and
11 James Prieger, assessed the achievement of various
12 broadband initiatives at the federal, state, and
13 local level. In that paper they found local
14 efforts have advantages to national programs.
15 When local governments and community organizations
16 are involved in overcoming broadband adoption
17 gaps, they typically begin with a much more
18 complete knowledge of what the barriers are in the
19 communities. However, that's not to say that
20 government efforts at the state and federal level
21 are not valuable.

22 Programs that operate on a larger scale

1 have the advantage of greater funding sources and
2 better data collection in evaluations tools.
3 Ideally, the National Broadband Plan would include
4 programmatic suggestions which would include the
5 advantage of municipal implementation accompanied
6 by federal support.

7 There are also a number of other areas
8 which government intervention could facilitate
9 broadband expansion. Law makers should ensure
10 that public housing developments are built with
11 wired broadband capabilities. The E-Rate program
12 should be expanded to include digital literacy
13 training for students and teachers. Digital
14 learning programs should be established and/or
15 expanded to include adult learners and community
16 programs.

17 The Universal Service Funds should be
18 restructure to include broadband services.
19 Governments should establish a national program
20 that promotes best practices and highlights the
21 elements of successful broadband programs that
22 should be provided to cities, counties, and state

1 government.

2 Governments should establish a clear
3 means of identifying, scaling, and replicating
4 successful county broadband programs. Government
5 must properly fund all county broadband programs.
6 However, the expansion of broadband is the first
7 and foremost matter of investment by public
8 companies. Over the past 2 years, the nation's
9 nearly 1,400 facilities-based broadband service
10 providers invested approximately \$120 billion in
11 modern communication networks. Government
12 practice and policy should work in conjunction
13 with the private sector to build upon the efforts
14 to bridge our digital divide.

15 Finally, I would like to conclude with
16 the emphasis on the importance of broadband for
17 our communities. Clearly, President Obama and the
18 FCC recognize the significance of this issue, but
19 I encourage you, the Commission, to remember when
20 crafting and finalizing the National Broadband
21 Plan, that the digital divide is a national
22 concern. Let me emphasize, the resolution resides

1 in our local communities. By embracing
2 public/private partnerships and governmental
3 support at the local, state, and federal level, we
4 can achieve our goal of connected communities and
5 a broadband nation.

6 I thank you for your time and looking
7 forward to working with you on this effort.

8 MR. LLOYD: So, FCC Commissioner Copps
9 has been here with us for this entire
10 presentation. I was wondering if you had any
11 questions that you wanted to pose before I get
12 started?

13 MR. COPPS: (inaudible)

14 MR. LLOYD: Thank you. So, again, Gil,
15 I think, is passing out cards for those of us in
16 the audience and I'm hoping Christian is getting
17 some things that are online.

18 Let me start by asking whether any of
19 you have any sense of where, given the increasing
20 strain on local -- whether it's city or county or
21 state -- budgets, where the money comes from for
22 either the research, the mapping, for the literacy

1 programs that you've talked about, for getting
2 computers in the homes of children? I hate to do
3 this, but because -- at least you're the only one
4 aside from me with gray hair on the panel,
5 Representative Smyre, I'm going to ask you, how do
6 we solve this funding problem? And are states
7 finding creative ways to address this challenge,
8 particularly meeting the needs of underserved
9 communities?

10 MR. SMYRE: That's a good question. As
11 you know, of our states have budget deficits. And
12 when you start talking about methodology and
13 fundamental and technology and things of that
14 nature, it somewhat is not a priority as it
15 relates to adoption and to the implementation of
16 public policy. But at the same time, I think,
17 when you deal with a broadband technology and
18 there's a direct correlation to health care
19 services, to education, to job creation, to job
20 applications, and those are technologies that are
21 very much linked to applications, I think, it has
22 to be elevated from a public policy perspective.

1 And I think as we talk more and more about this
2 issue, the key is to elevate the issue and make it
3 a state priority as well as now the President is
4 making it a national priority.

5 So, with that in mind, I think you would
6 have to talk about partnerships. You would have
7 to talk about various collaborations, whether or
8 not state governments alone could carry the
9 burden. But I know working with the mayors and
10 the county commissioners of -- there's a direct
11 correlation on public safety, how we share various
12 technology as it relates to first responders. So
13 there are ways to have the linkage that is
14 necessary, but cost is a factor and I know that --
15 I know city governments and county governments are
16 having difficult times, but I know at the state
17 level it's very difficult.

18 But Mark, I think the elevation of the
19 issue, making it more of a quality of life issue,
20 and elevating it, I think, puts it in a more --
21 when you put it into more of a priority, then it
22 puts you in more of a funding apparatus.

1 MR. LLOYD: So, Commissioner Steele, I
2 think you emphasized in your testimony, the
3 importance of Universal Service Funding
4 mechanisms. Do you see the Universal Service Fund
5 as the way to sort of fund some of this work at
6 the local level? And are you engaged now in how
7 the Universal Service Fund is working to support
8 schools and libraries through the E-Rate program?

9 MR. STEELE: I think that's a great
10 opportunity for municipalities and government
11 agencies to partner and make sure that we have
12 access and partnership with the Universal Fund.

13 This is an issue that's well beyond that
14 one mechanism. It's a public/private partnership
15 as well. We have to look at those companies who
16 are the communications companies around the
17 country to help us with this issue as well. They
18 have a lot to gain from this in our partnership.
19 I just met with the governor of the state of
20 Illinois on Monday. He's committed to me. He's
21 going to provide some funding to the counties
22 around Illinois to make sure this initiative gets

1 off the ground and we're at the leading edge of
2 trying to make sure that we provide access to
3 those who are in underprivileged and underserved
4 communities around Illinois.

5 But that link of the public/private
6 partnership is the most important link because it
7 says that this becomes more than just something
8 that the government has to do. It's important
9 that the public companies invest in this
10 partnership as well so we can grow it well beyond
11 the local municipalities trying to fund everything
12 out of a small pool of funds. And so I think that
13 the partnership with the Universal Program, really
14 leads us to that public/private partnership that
15 we're looking to establish.

16 MR. LLOYD: So, Mr. West, you talked for
17 a moment about some of the special challenges, not
18 only facing Latinos, but also facing Native
19 Americans. Are there special funding challenges
20 facing those communities? I -- forgive me for
21 sort of going on a little bit here, but I know
22 that the immigrant problem is not limited to the

1 Latino population, that there are African-Somali
2 immigrants here in the United states and that
3 we've got Haitian immigrants who are here in the
4 United States and we've got Vietnamese immigrants
5 here in the United States as well. But there
6 seems to be a special tie and concern about
7 whenever we start talking about funding, whether
8 some of this funding is going to immigrants here
9 who may not be legal immigrants. Are there some
10 special funding concerns that the Latino
11 population faces?

12 MR. WEST: Well, yes, it's a -- you
13 know, it's a broader issue that I think -- that
14 we're all engaged in at this point. You know, for
15 us it just seems inconceivable that you would not
16 want to include a child who is not documented in
17 terms of trying to get him -- he or she broadband
18 access. You know, after all, a society -- our
19 true constitution is all of us put together and
20 why wouldn't we want each of those parts to have
21 access to broadband and all the collective
22 knowledge that that encompasses.

1 So, it always will creep in and
2 obviously we're concerned that providers suddenly
3 become government-mandated that they can't provide
4 broadband to immigrants and it is an issue. I
5 agree, though, with Representative Smyre that it
6 is a priority issue.

7 One of the things in terms of the
8 funding that I'm always astonished with is the
9 public money. I mean, just -- when you saw the
10 stimulus money it was, I don't know, it was \$7
11 billion, I guess it was. But if you look at what
12 the private companies invest in broadband
13 development and getting it out there, I mean,
14 you're talking annually \$80 billion, I believe,
15 the collective broadband effort in this nation.

16 So, I don't know that it's going to
17 happen. I've been in -- I was a sergeant-in-arms
18 of our Nevada legislature, I was in city
19 government for five years, and then federal
20 government. I don't know that that funding is
21 actually going to be able to come from
22 governmental entities. I think that the priority

1 -- I think we need to work more closely with these
2 public companies and try to get them, and one
3 thing that I see that's conflicting right now
4 here, particularly at the Federal Communications
5 Commission level, is all the discussion is about
6 neutrality regulation. I mean, why are we focused
7 on neutrality regulation when we know that
8 broadband access is the most important thing that
9 we can -- closing the digital divide, I don't
10 think there can be conceivably anything more
11 important. I think almost all leaders agree that
12 education is number one and all the collective
13 education of mankind is in the Internet, it's in
14 broadband, and not getting that to people, that
15 has to be the highest priority. And I sort of see
16 the Commission, with all due respect, getting off
17 track here, focusing on things other than closing
18 the digital divide.

19 MR. LLOYD: One of the challenges here,
20 not to be too defensive about the Commission, is
21 that we, unfortunately, are challenged with having
22 to do many things at once. And so we have a clear

1 charge: We will provide a National Broadband Plan
2 to Congress when Congress has mandated that
3 happen. Nothing will allow us to get off track on
4 that despite various attempts. We're going to
5 focus on that and really appreciate your
6 testimony, but we promise you that we will keep
7 that focus.

8 Mayor Grant, you spoke eloquently about
9 a program called Digital Harmony, and I love that
10 name. And if I could ask you, where did the
11 funding come from to provide -- you said there
12 were like 150 computers to start with; I think you
13 mentioned over 250 children who were involved in
14 this program, I think the next year. Where did
15 the money come from to get the computers into
16 those homes? That's so important.

17 MR. GRANT: Let me first acknowledge our
18 president, the Honorable George Grace. I did not
19 mention him, that's protocol. And thank our
20 executive director, Vanessa Williams, who prepared
21 our remarks. So she's a little more qualified to
22 the specifics of the program.

1 However, let me say that I think it's
2 already been stated by my colleagues here on the
3 panel that the key or the answer to this
4 prevailing problem that we're faced with with
5 funding, and that is partnerships. Tallahassee,
6 Florida, and in their program, the Digital Harmony
7 program, could not have done this without a strong
8 public/private partnership.

9 It is to the advantage of the corporate
10 community to be engaged in the process and to help
11 fund many of these initiatives. And why is that
12 so? Because it is an increased customer base for
13 them. And so, we certainly did not absolve the
14 federal government from being a part of the
15 process and funding these initiatives. Clearly,
16 cities like ours cannot afford it. And our
17 membership, 40 percent of our membership are rural
18 communities. They don't have the budgets to build
19 the infrastructure or bring these types of
20 programs in.

21 But we are willing to partner and we
22 believe that there are diamonds in the rough in

1 our community and if individuals work with us
2 through the broadband plan to ensure that we make
3 it accessible for companies to come in and make
4 investments into our communities, make it
5 accessible for our communities to access the
6 Internet, because there's so much opportunity that
7 is gained.

8 If you look at that particular example,
9 where the students -- 100 families received these
10 computers, and as a result of that we saw a 50
11 percent increase in grade performance. We saw
12 their behaviors change. It's because they had
13 access.

14 So now if our students are performing
15 better, then the workforce also becomes better,
16 and if the workforce becomes better, then the
17 economy becomes better. It's not rocket science
18 here.

19 Again, there's a Scripture in the Bible,
20 and I'm a Scripture man, that says, "We then that
21 are strong must embed the infirmities of the
22 weak." We believe that corporate America must

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1 play a strong role in investing in our
2 communities. We believe that the federal
3 government, although it's going through its own
4 economic challenges, that it clearly has more
5 money than Seat Pleasant, Maryland does, and so
6 those funds should be coming into our communities
7 to help invest for our people.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. LLOYD: Thank you.

10 MR. SMYRE: I just wanted to follow up
11 with the mayor because I think he hit a great
12 point as it relates to the collaboration and the
13 partnerships and so did Commissioner Steele. The
14 essence of it is that the corporate public/private
15 sector have got to come together on this issue and
16 from a governmental standpoint, it has to be more
17 prioritized, it has to be elevated more from the
18 governmental standpoint. Now, the public and
19 private sector is always ahead of the government.
20 I mean, let's just call it what it is. It is what
21 it is. You all are ahead of us. It just takes us
22 longer to comprehend and to grasp and government

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1 is slow in that respect. But at the same time, I
2 recall even my hometown, there is a program,
3 "Reach One/Teach One." And an ex-basketball
4 player and coach, Sam Mitchell, started a program
5 in a housing project where he just set up
6 computers and, just like the gentleman has, they
7 have about 20 computers in the public housing
8 division, and every morning there's a line there
9 to get in.

10 Our library system wanted to build a new
11 library and there was a debate whether do you do a
12 computer Internet technology room or do you do one
13 on basic learning, and there was a debate on that,
14 old school and new school. And so happily, new
15 school, the digital people won out, and there are
16 maybe 24, 25 computers in this new library. And
17 every morning, I can go by there -- not every
18 morning, but I've gone by there on a morning at
19 8:00 to see the line eking out the door. So, the
20 people, they're yearning for it. We've just got
21 to continue to educate the underserved and the
22 low- income and that demographic because

1 broadband, you know, we'll grab this in a New York
2 second and do it, but from an application and from
3 a technology standpoint, it's not there. It's
4 just -- and black elected officials, all elected
5 officials have to continue to talk about this over
6 and over and over again so that there is some
7 connectivity.

8 MR. LLOYD: So, are there -- can any of
9 the panelists, and I'm going to throw this last
10 question out because we've got lots of questions
11 from the -- from both online and from the
12 audience, but can any of the panelists point to a
13 good example of a local public/private partnership
14 addressing the needs, particularly, of underserved
15 communities?

16 MR. STEELE: Well, particularly in my
17 neighborhood, I help to sit on a board that built
18 a community center where we have a clinic in the
19 community center, we have a child care teaching
20 mothers how to expand their ability to be good
21 mothers, we have the park district, and we have a
22 technology center in that one facility. And so

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1 you have four other organizations in that one
2 building that folks can come to one facility and
3 have access to many different --

4 MR. LLOYD: And this is a public/private
5 partnership?

6 MR. STEELE: It's a public/private
7 partnership because it's part of the Sears
8 Foundation that helped us to build it. And so we
9 partnered -- it is actually on the land that the
10 Sears Corporate had their corporate offices. And
11 so when we tore down one of their old buildings,
12 we built this new community center with the Sears
13 Foundation, and put these various not-for-profits
14 in there that are now benefitting the community
15 and you have young people from the community who
16 are teaching technology to the older adults. You
17 can get your computer rebuilt there.

18 And I'll tell you, it's a great time for
19 us right now because we're going into the 2010
20 Census, so we'll know where people are, we'll know
21 what people are doing. So it's a great time for
22 us to be working on a project like this right now

1 because it gives us the demographics of where
2 people are at this time.

3 MR. LLOYD: Thank you very much for
4 that. Now we have roughly an hour to go. We're
5 going to try to wrap up in about 45 minutes or so.
6 And we have, I think, more questions than we can
7 possibly even begin to address. So I'm going to
8 ask you, this is -- I think I was asked sort of
9 starting out whether I could ask the officials
10 here to speak into the mic and I don't think
11 that's been a problem. The challenge, I think,
12 with all of this -- I'm a former teacher, so I
13 have the same sort of challenge. The challenge is
14 short answers, and so, let's see if we can -- I do
15 understand the challenge, so let's see if we can
16 get some short answers here so we can get as much
17 of the public input as possible.

18 So, one question here, again, this is
19 not directed at anyone in particular, can anyone
20 on the panel identify any organized pushback
21 against a national broadband?

22 Is that a no? That's about as short of

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1 an answer as we're going to get.

2 Community colleges have taken a severe
3 hit in the economic downturn, increased
4 enrollments, decreased budgets. They have --
5 they're all concerned about being able to maintain
6 current levels of broadband. Should there be some
7 sort of E-Rate funding extended, particularly to
8 community colleges?

9 MR. STEELE: Well, I think it's a
10 positive thing. Actually, I just e-mailed my
11 president of the community college in my district
12 this morning because he and I have that kind of
13 relationship, we stay very close. And he has been
14 a very good leader in terms of his ability to draw
15 students into his facility and I think it's great
16 positive opportunity to use that E-Rate to provide
17 them with some additional digital assistance. I
18 think we've got to do a better job of whatever
19 rate -- whatever opportunity we can, to help them
20 draw resources where they are training and
21 educating the individuals in our communities.
22 We've got to provide those resources to those

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1 individuals to grow the educational opportunities
2 for our communities.

3 MR. LLOYD: And have any of the
4 panelists been involved in helping the local
5 school districts? I believe that E-Rate funding
6 has been limited to K through 12 school. So, have
7 any of you been involved in helping those local
8 school systems obtain E-Rate funds to see what
9 sort of challenge they face?

10 MR. STEELE: Well, I'm a founder of an
11 elementary school and we've applied. We have not
12 received the funding just yet, but I founded -- I
13 have a pre-K through eighth grade school in my
14 community that I founded three years ago. And
15 actually, I just got invited to build a school in
16 Dubai because of the growth, the academic growth
17 of my kids in my school, that happened so fast.
18 Somehow the Minister of Education in another
19 country got wind of this and invited me to come
20 over and do a school in his country. Only because
21 of the economy we're not going to open the school
22 this January because we were planning to open it

1 next month.

2 MR. LLOYD: But you have applied for

3 E-Rate --

4 MR. STEELE: Absolutely, yes.

5 MR. LLOYD: -- funding for a local
6 public elementary school?

7 MR. STEELE: That is correct.

8 MR. LLOYD: But no funding?

9 MR. STEELE: No funding just yet. I
10 mean, again, it's competitive and so we have to
11 kind of reassess and go after it again.

12 MR. LLOYD: Who is calculating the
13 economic impact in dollars and cents of expanding
14 application to broadband and reducing costs?
15 Could these funds be used to expand access and
16 adoption?

17 Mr. West, you were running something
18 about the think tank. Do you have any sense of
19 who's doing this work about the economic impact in
20 expanding?

21 MR. WEST: I think, I believe that most
22 everybody is looking at different areas in that.

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1 I think that, yes, you mentioned a joint center,
2 but I know the PEW is looking at it, also; all the
3 individual economists and all the different
4 providers are doing this, so they're all looking
5 at different portions of it. And when we studied
6 the issue, you know, we're polling from so many
7 different areas, polling data, but is the question
8 referring -- is the question saying that they
9 should use the funding that they're using for
10 research and use that for adoption? Is that
11 what's implied in that question? Do you --

12 MR. LLOYD: Well, again, as I understand
13 it, I think -- and to some extent, part of this is
14 some of the work that the FCC is looking at. It
15 is -- we talk an awful lot about the cost of
16 funding and I've been talking about the cost of
17 funding. I've got funding on my mind. But what's
18 the impact? And so, if you -- what are the
19 benefits of making sure that all Americans have
20 broadband? Might that return additional dollars
21 that we were not anticipating to local, state,
22 federal governments? And so, what is the impact

1 of this and the savings? I just got one note
2 saying "the savings" helping me out just in time.

3 MR. WEST: I can only say that the
4 economic multiplier effect, trying to evaluate the
5 economic multiplier effect and the advantages
6 would be very difficult. It's endless. The only
7 thing I can say there.

8 MR. LLOYD: Commissioner Steele, you
9 were nodding as if you might actually have the
10 answer to this question.

11 MR. STEELE: No, no, no, no. I'll let
12 them stay with my colleague here.

13 MR. LLOYD: All right. You have all
14 addressed the critical challenges and benefits of
15 broadband adoption and clearly outlined the needs
16 of minority communities, but I want to pose a
17 question about another area of need: Educating
18 underserved communities on the value of online
19 tools and career success and entrepreneurship. We
20 all talk about digital literacy programs, which
21 are extremely important, but what about education
22 on the value proposition of broadband

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1 technologies, specifically for underserved youth?

2 MR. STEELE: You know, I hate to be the
3 one who talks about so much creativity, but in my
4 community also we developed a program for
5 ex-offenders and they use computer technology as a
6 way to help get themselves back on track because
7 they've been away from the community for such a
8 long period of time, but to give themselves skill
9 levels so they can go out and market themselves to
10 the level that they create their own business, and
11 their business is sold on the Internet. And so
12 they have a business where they sell products,
13 where they raise bees, and all the honey that they
14 raise bees, is now sold in face and body type
15 products. And so, this organization has used the
16 Internet to train ex- offenders to become good
17 citizens, and now they're working individuals who
18 are now contributing, as my colleague said, back
19 into the economy. And that's what we have to do.
20 And the Internet has provided that resource for
21 them.

22 MR. LLOYD: Representative -- I've been

1 saying Smyres -- it's Smyre?

2 MR. SMYRE: It's Smyre.

3 MR. LLOYD: I apologize.

4 MR. SMYRE: No problem.

5 MR. LLOYD: You had mentioned earlier on
6 about the importance of local communities helping
7 to dig in and find out what's working and what's
8 not working regarding broadband adoption and use.
9 Here's a question I would like to direct to you.
10 What research questions should the Federal
11 Communications Commission ask in discerning how
12 its broadband policies might impact the closing of
13 the digital divide? What are the questions that
14 we should be asking from your point of view?

15 MR. SMYRE: I think that once you delve
16 off into this issue the question of accessibility,
17 the question of affordability, and how it can be
18 successful. I think that having -- when I heard
19 that you were having panelists all across the
20 country, I was eager to participate as I am here
21 today just coming off our annual conference that
22 we had on broadband technology at Ft. Lauderdale,

1 and those are some questions that we have. You
2 know, what's going to be accessible, what's
3 affordability, what is funding, what kind of
4 apparatus, what kind of resources are going to be
5 available and how is it applicable to quality of
6 life? So, it's those types of key component.
7 And, of course, in a lot of instances, funding,
8 and the ability to be able to implement the policy
9 and lots of times we partnership with the federal
10 government and it starts off in a partnership
11 fashion, but it's born on the expense of the local
12 municipalities and the states. So to us funding
13 is key as it relates to how we implement this
14 policy.

15 MR. LLOYD: Thank you. Mayor Grant, one
16 of the challenges is that even in relatively small
17 communities, these are complex organizations that
18 you are managing. How do local officials manage
19 competing broadband meetings among the school
20 board, police, fire, rescue, libraries, and other
21 public services?

22 MR. GRANT: Well, obviously I think the

1 answer is within the question, that it is a
2 challenge. Every aspect of government is
3 competing for resources for their various
4 departments. Citizens are demanding or advocating
5 on behalf of various departments. We don't have a
6 large citizen core or advocacy group necessarily
7 in many of our communities that are advocating
8 let's set up a broadband. What they're asking for
9 is police services, they're asking for better
10 schools, they're asking for various things, but
11 not necessarily broadband.

12 I think one of the previous questions
13 kind of alluded to that. is how do we educate the
14 public and how do we engage the public more so
15 that they can understand that if you are having
16 access, if you're connected to the world --
17 because most of our communities are not connected
18 to the world and they're barely connected within
19 their own communities. In these rural communities
20 they live so far from urban centers or city
21 centers where they can access information.

22 So, we don't have advocacy groups that

1 are necessarily coming to us in many of our
2 communities, particularly the smaller, rural
3 communities, that are asking for the broadband,
4 they're asking for the basic services.

5 MR. LLOYD: Thank you. So, here's a
6 question for anyone who wants to take this on.
7 How can the FCC make it easier for local
8 governments to make the hard decisions on eminent
9 domain for broadband decisions that will require
10 designation of broadband as a public focus?

11 So, are there -- I know there was a
12 recommendation about continuing to work with the
13 IAC, but are there any recommendations from this
14 panel on what the Broadband Plan should include so
15 that the FCC can help with the hard decisions
16 regarding questions related to eminent domain?

17 MR. WEST: I would have to say, Mr.
18 Lloyd, that the FCC is definitely going to have to
19 present some sort of criteria to state and local
20 governments on how they should evaluate when to
21 use eminent domain and give them some sort of -- I
22 think that they are in need of some sort of

1 evaluation system and that they can use in
2 evaluating what qualifies as good for the public
3 use, is for the public versus, you know, to help
4 somebody -- an individual get wealthy.

5 MR. LLOYD: So, if I understand the
6 recommendation, it is that you are suggesting that
7 the FCC in the Broadband Plan be specific about
8 the criteria that local governments need to look
9 at in exercising eminent domain for public
10 purpose. That simply saying that local
11 government's going to exercise eminent domain is
12 not sufficient, but that it is important for the
13 FCC to lay out, here's the criteria --

14 MR. WEST: These are some guidelines
15 that you should use in evaluating whether, you
16 know, whether you should use eminent domain or
17 not.

18 MR. LLOYD: So, we had a couple of
19 questions here about the relationship really
20 between state and local governments. So this
21 question is, how should states prioritize their
22 recommendations to NTIA for local adoption,

1 computer centers, and deployment programs? So, is
2 there -- as distinct from the work that local
3 municipalities engage in, are there things that
4 states should be doing that might be applying for
5 broadband grants in relationship to NTIA funds or
6 Recovery Act funds, to help the local communities
7 adopt and fund computer centers and other
8 deployment programs?

9 MR. STEELE: Well, I think it's an
10 opportunity for states to look at where they can
11 influence replication. I think it's quite
12 important that you draw upon the ability to create
13 centers where you can give visitors -- we could
14 come in and we can replicate this in other areas
15 of our state by looking at what's been modeled in
16 the areas. For instance, Chicago, we know it's a
17 center of tourism, an attraction, and so many
18 people visit us there for a variety of different
19 reasons and so we can invite individuals to come
20 by whether they live in our state or not, where
21 they could come see our center that's working very
22 well. It's a way of saying, we will replicate

1 this in other areas of the state, in other states
2 across the United States, and that's why
3 replication is very important for our valuation
4 total.

5 MR. WEST: Mr. Lloyd, I just wanted to
6 add one quick thing to that. One of the big
7 concerns of the communities of color is the
8 politics that will come in. You know, when you
9 get a particular governor, if he's a -- you know,
10 whenever it seems political considerations come
11 in, we're going to get the short end of the stick.
12 So anything that can go into the equation,
13 eliminate the politics, you know, rewarding
14 whoever voted for you or that sort of thing, would
15 help.

16 MR. SMYRE: That's why I believe in a
17 National Broadband Policy and not allowing the
18 states -- because, as you said, jurisdictions are
19 different, politics are different. But, at the
20 same time, if there is a -- if there are
21 guidelines and a national policy, we won't have a
22 hodgepodge of various state laws around the

1 country.

2 MR. LLOYD: So, I've got several online
3 questions here. One is, are there special things
4 that local officials who are trying to help
5 underserved communities doing to ensure that 8A
6 contractors are included in the local VTOP -- or I
7 would assume Broadband Initiative Program as well
8 -- initiatives, in accordance with the Recovery
9 Act? So, are there some things that the local
10 officials are doing to make sure that 8A
11 contractors are involved in some of this work?

12 MR. SMYRE: Well, at the state level, we
13 try to encourage that in some areas of the
14 Reinvestment Recovery Act. There are some areas
15 where it's easier to do. In the area of
16 transportation, in some vending areas we're able
17 to make it applicable as it relates to some of the
18 contractors. But in some areas we're -- as a
19 state government, we don't have the applicable
20 laws that will make it applicable to a contractor.
21 It has to be related to a linkage between the
22 federal government and that particular agency and

1 the one that is crystallized to me in my state is
2 transportation and that area, we have more
3 leverage and more leeway, on the other areas, more
4 restrictive.

5 MR. LLOYD: So, here's an online
6 question that I think came in during the time of
7 Mayor Grant's statement. How can a private
8 company looking to develop private/public
9 partnerships for broadband initiatives to
10 underserved communities -- how and where do we --
11 I'm assuming this is a private company asking --
12 how and where do we start the process?

13 MR. GRANT: Clearly, you start at the
14 mayor's office. But seriously, and I appreciate
15 that question because it takes me to another
16 direction. National Caucus of Black Mayors, 650
17 of us, the largest municipality would be the
18 federal government. One of the smallest has less
19 than 100 residents in it. The majority of our
20 membership would be in very small, rural
21 communities. And so, with that understood, we
22 have a capacity issue and it's a serious capacity

1 issue to address some of these issues. So, that
2 makes the partnerships with corporate America even
3 more valuable to us.

4 We don't have the dollars to hire a Mark
5 Lloyd to work for us because we couldn't afford
6 you, and so -- or your counterparts -- to put
7 together the applications, to put together the
8 plans, develop the plans, so that we could go
9 after funding that might be available. So, it
10 becomes very important that our corporate partners
11 begin to look at us as opportunities and come in
12 with our bids and proposals, that we can negotiate
13 together with to go after the funding that exists
14 out there to support our communities.

15 MR. LLOYD: So, I think you've given the
16 questioner both, come to the mayor's office and
17 here's what you need to bring.

18 This was a question that came in during
19 Commissioner Steele's presentation. For what
20 purposes is broadband being used by these
21 households? And do these groups publish their
22 curriculum for public review?

1 MR. STEELE: I don't know if anything is
2 being published, but the use of broadband
3 primarily for these households will impact them in
4 the employment area, people who are looking for
5 jobs. I need jobs right now. And so most of the
6 companies, and most of the major companies right
7 now, are publishing their job openings online, and
8 so that's the best way of getting access to those
9 job openings.

10 Health care and health concerns, most of
11 us we get a cold or our baby gets sick, we're
12 going to find out what we can do online first of
13 all before we go to the doctor.

14 And thirdly, the opportunity for most
15 people who are looking for education to grow their
16 skill level. They're going online because it's
17 the cheapest way to get your education without
18 having to go to a classroom. And so, those are
19 the three best ways to look at what broadband does
20 in your household.

21 MR. LLOYD: In the context of need, are
22 any of the panelists aware of ways to increase

1 broadband access in public housing communities
2 where federal funding for centers is decreasing?

3 MR. SMYRE: I'll tell you, in the
4 Edgewood Terrace area here in D.C., they have the
5 program where it was a collaboration between HUD
6 and a couple other preservation areas and they
7 focused on installing new broadband technology in
8 every residence and I think that would be a good
9 public policy that we would deploy broadband to
10 each individual residence if anything new is
11 built, that automatically has access, the Internet
12 capabilities and deployment of broadband
13 technology. And in Edgewood it had a direct
14 impact on violence, crimes, on gang-related
15 activities, and they saw the increase of
16 individual performance of all the young people in
17 Edgewood Terrace. So, those are some of the areas
18 that we can, from a public policy standpoint, that
19 any new -- because if you try to go now and
20 retrofit, it probably would be out of the realm of
21 the budgetary considerations. But anything HUD
22 builds now and new, should be broadband deployment

1 and Internet access in every residence in my
2 opinion.

3 MR. STEELE: HUD currently has a
4 contract with a company here in (inaudible) Silver
5 Spring, that has 2,300 centers in public housing
6 across the country. So, this is not new. This is
7 something that's been going on for quite some
8 time. So, HUD does have a provider right now that
9 is specializing in putting computer centers in
10 public housing facilities across the country.

11 MR. LLOYD: One of the most difficult
12 things, I think, that any public official has to
13 do is to sort of own up to the fact that there are
14 priorities and that we're not going to be able to
15 do everything. And so I'm going to ask you each
16 to do this very difficult thing. I'm going to --
17 there are three questions here. This is a
18 question from the audience. I'm going to ask you
19 to rank the priorities for us.

20 Adoption, promoting adoption, making
21 sure that there is access, number two, or making
22 sure that whatever is provided is affordable. And

1 that might be done, I would assume, through
2 universal service subsidies or whatever, but
3 assuming limited dollars, where would you put the
4 priority? Adoption? Access? Or affordability?

5 Representative Smyre?

6 MR. SMYRE: Why am I always first? I
7 would have to say access and affordability.

8 MR. LLOYD: Number one and two?

9 MR. SMYRE: Yeah.

10 MR. LLOYD: Access, affordability, and
11 then adoption.

12 MR. SMYRE: Well, it's --

13 MR. LLOYD: I know it's tough.

14 MR. SMYRE: Yes.

15 MR. LLOYD: Okay. Mr. West?

16 MR. WEST: I'm sorry, Mr. Lloyd. I
17 can't rank those. Every situation is different.
18 I mean, every community is different. I mean, you
19 know, if you're in the middle of Kansas and the
20 middle of inner-city Chicago, there's two
21 different priorities, so they're all important.

22 MR. LLOYD: So, based on -- you would

1 say based on the particular need of the community?

2 MR. WEST: Yes, absolutely.

3 MR. SMYRE: I would say that as well. I
4 was -- being from Georgia, I flew to Des Moines,
5 Iowa, for a day with state legislators out there
6 and I met with the Farm Bureau, and their key was
7 the accessibility. I mean, you've got it -- they
8 have to have it in rural areas and it's a lot
9 different from a Chicago, so it's just -- it's
10 hard -- I agree with Gus. It's just hard to take
11 one yardstick and measure everybody by it. But
12 that's just -- in that area, because of the
13 density, it's having the accessible, having the
14 impact of the lines and the pipes coming, to me.

15 MR. LLOYD: So, one of the challenges is
16 -- I mean, I'm not a former political leader, but
17 I am a former journalist and I'm certainly used to
18 speaking to political leaders and getting answers
19 that sort of, well, you know, we want a little bit
20 of everything.

21 I'm going to try it with you,
22 Commissioner Steele. Access, affordability,

1 adoption? Which of those ought to come -- and if
2 we have to come up with a priority?

3 MR. STEELE: For me it's a little
4 different because I come from a major urban
5 environment and so for me adoption would be first.
6 You've got to give direction to people, so if you
7 don't give direction to the providers or direction
8 to government officials on what we're trying to
9 do, then you kind of leave people hanging out
10 there. So, you've got to give adoption as for me,
11 number one.

12 Two, access. Who's going to be using
13 it? You know, so that's number two for me is
14 access.

15 And then number three, affordability.
16 Where can you use it, you know? So those are my
17 priorities on how I would look at it.

18 MR. LLOYD: Great. Great, I appreciate
19 that. And Mayor Grant, you have no excuse. You
20 have a particular community that you can talk
21 about, so access, affordability, adoption?

22 MR. GRANT: Well, I mean, if you -- and

1 I'm glad that Calvin went first. But really, if
2 you're speaking about our community, really at
3 this point in time, it's really about
4 affordability. We have access and it's already
5 adoption. I mean, I'm not from one of those
6 communities that are rural in the South or
7 something. I mean, we have access to two
8 broadband and Internet, so it's about
9 affordability.

10 MR. LLOYD: So, are you one of those
11 Marylanders who don't think you're in the South?

12 What content are local and state
13 governments providing for their constituents and
14 what will they get when broadband becomes
15 available? And so, this is a question about what
16 comes first, the chicken or the egg, the content
17 or the access. And so, what is the content that
18 local and state governments are providing to --
19 well, to spur adoption in local communities?

20 MR. STEELE: Well, from my point of view
21 in Cook County, it's so important that we provide
22 our citizenry and those who are in those

1 underprivileged and underserved communities
2 opportunity to access that information that is
3 best utilized and will improve their quality of
4 life. And so, the opportunity for employment, you
5 know, what kind of job availability do we have in
6 Cook County that can help individuals? We have
7 one of the largest zoos in the country that is
8 managed by Cook County. And so, folks can have
9 access to jobs at the zoo. We have one of the
10 largest gardens, a 40,000 acre garden that's one
11 of the largest in the country where we have a
12 variety of different jobs, seasonal jobs, so
13 people can have access to that facility to learn a
14 different type of skill level.

15 And so, that access to information that
16 can really improve their quality of life somehow
17 is most important that we can provide to those
18 residents.

19 MR. LLOYD: So, we're getting to roughly
20 about the time that I wanted to try and wrap up,
21 but I wanted to give each of the panelists an
22 opportunity to make a closing statement and

1 provide a final thought. If we've missed anything
2 that you want to make sure that you communicate to
3 the FCC, what would that be? Is there some
4 emphasis that you wanted to leave us with here?
5 And we don't have to start with Representative
6 Smyre.

7 MR. WEST: I just wanted to say a couple
8 of things to -- this is more directed at the local
9 leaders who are often in charge of our school
10 districts and so forth. I always look for ways to
11 try to get somebody on the Internet reason.
12 Sometimes if you give them a reason that they have
13 to be on then they'll get on. And, you know, I
14 had an employee working for me and I said, hey, I
15 need your e-mail so you can get your check stub --
16 because she had a direct deposit -- and anyway, it
17 gave her a reason to get an e-mail and try to get
18 on.

19 One thing I thought that was very
20 interesting is we have in my son's class -- they
21 have a listserv and all the parents need to be on
22 this listserv because if you're not on, then you

1 don't know what's happening with your child that
2 day, you're not part of it. And I know that there
3 will be a few parents that may not get on that
4 listserv, but if you give them that reason -- so,
5 if the mayors and the ones that are in charge of
6 these school districts and so forth, if they could
7 ask each classroom, each teacher, to have a
8 listserv with all the parents on that particular
9 listserv and just stay in contact with what's
10 happening with their child, that could be
11 interesting, it could be helpful.

12 Just in closing message to the Federal
13 Communications Commission, you know, and I said
14 this -- we were having dinner last night, I said,
15 I know that the Federal Communications Commission
16 can walk and chew gum at the same time, but also
17 I've been in congressional testimony where you've
18 talked about the lack of resources, needing more
19 resources to perform the job that you -- it's only
20 again that earlier message that I had that the
21 focus should -- the primary focus, the wholly
22 focus, if you will, is the digital divide and to

1 the extent that anything gets in that way, I
2 think, is detrimental to our community.

3 MR. LLOYD: Thank you. Appreciate that.
4 Commissioner Steele?

5 MR. STEELE: Well, I think it's quite
6 important that I share the message that these
7 individuals sitting to my left and to my right:
8 We are the dash. And what I mean by "we are the
9 dash" is broadband adoption started in 2009 and by
10 2010, that dash in between, because we are where
11 the rubber meets the road. We're the ones who
12 take the message back to the individuals in our
13 communities, and so we want to make sure that that
14 dash does not have a closing side to it. We want
15 to continue to work to make sure that we're
16 bringing information back to our community that's
17 going to be helpful to them.

18 And on a much broader scale as computers
19 are getting smaller, they're two pounds now, and
20 they're even ounces -- they're even ounces now --
21 we have to make sure our people that we represent,
22 have access. And that's what we're trying to do.

1 MR. LLOYD: Thank you, thank you. Mayor
2 Grant.

3 MR. GRANT: Well, just in closing,
4 again, thank you so very much on behalf of the
5 National Conference of Black Mayors, for allowing
6 us to participate. And I thank my colleagues as
7 well for their leadership and their service in
8 this effort and those who are in the audience.

9 If America is to be the great hope and
10 great promise that we know that it can be, it is
11 important that the FCC's work move toward
12 inclusion of all of its citizenry, that its
13 efforts must make certain that as they move
14 forward and work to have access for all Americans,
15 then America can be the strong and true beacon
16 light of democracy, and hope, and freedom for the
17 world.

18 If we leave anybody behind, we allow our
19 country to not realize its full potential. And
20 so, as the FCC commissioners move forward with the
21 Broadband Plan, they must keep in the forefront of
22 their mind that all of America must be able to

1 have access.

2 MR. LLOYD: Representative Smyre, you'll
3 have the final words.

4 MR. SMYRE: Thank you very much, Mr.
5 Lloyd, for this opportunity for us to come as
6 elected officials, the only people in America that
7 set public policy are elected officials. The only
8 people in America that set public policy are
9 elected officials. The FCC implements public
10 policy. And so those of us who are elected, and
11 as members of the National Black Caucus of State
12 Legislators, as we -- and as the FCC implements
13 the National Broadband Plan, we just ask that you
14 adopt one that keeps all Americans in mind,
15 particularly those living in low-income, minority,
16 rural, tribal, and underserved communities.

17 I have 13 recommendations for the
18 implementation that I didn't get a chance to talk
19 about in our opening statement, but I just want to
20 mention three of them in pursuit of the
21 implementation and one is fund and conduct
22 quantitative and qualitative research focused

1 specifically on broadband connectivity, adoption,
2 and the use among people of color, particularly
3 those in un-served and underserved communities.

4 The second one is complete the
5 deployment of broadband networks to the
6 underserved areas including rural communities and
7 Native American tribal lands and link the network
8 to public institution and community based
9 organizations as supplements to home-based
10 service.

11 And the last one is address
12 affordability issues, through initiatives such as
13 federal general revenue, funding subsidies for
14 computing devices, and broadband Internet service,
15 and public/private partnerships that can be
16 leveraged to create greater access and adoption
17 opportunities or other policies that overcome
18 price barriers. Affordability is a key component
19 with our constituencies.

20 So, with that in mind, I again thank you
21 and the FCC for giving us this opportunity to be a
22 voice and to be a participant in this issue of

1 broadband technology. Thank you.

2 MR. LLOYD: Well, and I want to thank
3 all of the panelists for sharing your valuable
4 time. I know that you folks have got other things
5 to do, but it's very important that we have been
6 able to hear from you and gain your wisdom and
7 your insight as we construct this plan. And I
8 promise you, we will not lose focus. We're going
9 to make sure that we come up with a plan and get
10 it to Congress on our deadline.

11 So, again, and if the audience could
12 join me in thanking the panel, I really appreciate
13 your doing this. Thank you very much.

14 (Whereupon, at 11:30 a.m., the
15 PROCEEDINGS were adjourned.)

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