

**Communications
Workers of America
AFL-CIO, CLC**

501 Third Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001-2797
202/434-1100



June 14th, 2011

Hon. Doris Matsui
222 Cannon Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Matsui:

On behalf of our over 700,000 members, the Communications Workers of America (CWA) strongly supports your legislation, the "Broadband Affordability Act of 2011."

This legislation directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to establish a program to provide low-income Americans living in rural and urban areas with assistance in subscribing to affordable broadband service. Specifically, it would expand the Universal Service Fund Lifeline Assistance Program to allow those funds to be used to offer discounted broadband service. Under the legislation, customers would receive a discount on their monthly broadband service bill. The bill directs the FCC to apply the same criteria it uses to determine eligibility for participation in the Lifeline telephone service program as the qualifying standard for low-income Americans to receive discounted broadband service.

Universal, affordable access to high-speed communications networks is as essential today as is access to voice communications. Enactment of this bill would help to ensure that every American has access to all the promises of the information age. This would reduce the digital divide that currently excludes low-income persons, including many minorities, from having access to broadband service. This legislation is especially important in light of the current economic climate, in which many hard working Americans simply cannot afford to pay up to \$60 a month to receive broadband service.

For all many of these reasons, CWA gives its strong support for the "Broadband Affordability Act of 2011."

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Varson', is written over a faint, larger version of the same signature.

Shane Varson
Legislative Director, Communications Workers of America

