



Kirk Miller <samkm@sammt.org>

Re: Politico story on E-rate delays and denials, focusing on Montana

1 message

Andrew Kenny <andrew@educationsuperhighway.org>

Fri, Mar 16, 2018 at 12:14 PM

To: "Smillie, Siri" <SSmillie@mt.gov>

Cc: Dennis Parman <dparman@mrea-mt.org>, Kirk Miller <samkm@sammt.org>, "Rothenbuecher, A.C." <A.C.Rothenbuecher@mt.gov>, "Anseth, Becky" <BAnseth@mt.gov>, "Olson, Jennifer" <JeOlson@mt.gov>, "Cushman, Michele" <MCushman2@mt.gov>, Hatton Littman <hlittman@mcps.k12.mt.us>, "Stapp, Jennie" <JStapp2@mt.gov>, MQEC <dburke@mqec.org>, Team MT <montana@educationsuperhighway.org>

Happy Friday! That's great news Siri! Very powerful.

Andrew Kenny

State Engagement Manager

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Connecting classrooms to high-speed broadband

On Fri, Mar 16, 2018 at 10:37 AM, Smillie, Siri <SSmillie@mt.gov> wrote:

Happy Friday – just wanted to pass along this press release and letter from Sen. Tester and Governor Bullock for everyone's awareness.

From: Andrew Kenny [mailto:andrew@educationsuperhighway.org]**Sent:** Wednesday, March 07, 2018 10:34 AM**To:** Dennis Parman <dparman@mrea-mt.org>; Smillie, Siri <SSmillie@mt.gov>; Kirk Miller <samkm@sammt.org>; Rothenbuecher, A.C. <A.C.Rothenbuecher@mt.gov>; Anseth, Becky <BAnseth@mt.gov>; Olson, Jennifer <JeOlson@mt.gov>; Cushman, Michele <MCushman2@mt.gov>; Hatton Littman <hlittman@mcps.k12.mt.us>; Stapp, Jennie <JStapp2@mt.gov>; MQEC <dburke@mqec.org>**Cc:** Team MT <montana@educationsuperhighway.org>**Subject:** Politico story on E-rate delays and denials, focusing on Montana

Hi all,

Wanted to inform you all that today [Politico ran the story \(link\)](#) we've all been working on for the past few weeks. [Evan also published an op-ed today \(link\)](#) that included powerful quotes from Woodman students about their denial. It's gratifying to see the issues elevated in D.C. and the broader E-rate community across the country.

Thank you all for the support and helping to spread the word about these important issues! In particular, Siri we and the schools impacted so appreciate the Governor speaking out on this and fighting for Montana schools.

In partnership,

ESH Montana Team

Andrew Kenny

State Engagement Manager

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Connecting classrooms to high-speed broadband

----- Forwarded message -----

From: "Kuntz, Dave (Tester)" <Dave_Kuntz@tester.senate.gov>

To: "Kuntz, Dave (Tester)" <Dave_Kuntz@tester.senate.gov>

Cc: "Abel, Ronja" <RAbel@mt.gov>

Bcc:

Date: Fri, 16 Mar 2018 16:56:48 +0000

Subject: RELEASE: Tester, Bullock Demand FCC Cut Red Tape, Deliver High-Speed Internet for Montana Students

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 16, 2018

Dave Kuntz (Tester) – [202.228.0371](tel:202.228.0371)

Ronja Abel (Bullock) – [406.444.9725](tel:406.444.9725)

Tester, Bullock Demand FCC Cut Red Tape, Deliver High-Speed Internet for Montana Students

Senator, Governor Demand Loosening Bureaucratic Burdens on Rural Schools

(Montana) – U.S. Senator Jon Tester and Governor Steve Bullock are calling on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to update a program aimed at bringing broadband to rural schools, following a [report](#) that applications are facing long delays and denials.

Tester and Bullock are urging FCC Chairman Ajit Pai to reform the E-Rate Program, an FCC initiative that provides discounts on telecommunications services to schools and libraries, to cut red tape and ensure Montana students have access to high-speed internet.

“To ensure our children are prepared for a globally connected economy and 21st century jobs, it is vital that all classrooms are equipped with high-speed internet,” wrote Tester and Bullock. **“A quality public education is the foundation of our democracy and our future workforce.”**

Delays in the E-Rate Program have forced schools like Woodman School in Missoula County wait in limbo for critical broadband resources.

“You must not let burdensome paperwork stand between Montana students and their access to critical educational material,” Tester and Bullock continued in their letter to Pai. **“We stand ready to work with the FCC to reduce bureaucratic barriers and enhance opportunities for high-speed internet deployment.”**

As reported in [Politico](#), Woodman School services K-8 and has eight staff members, including teachers. They currently bus students to other schools for testing and rely on teachers and students to use the internet at their homes for assignments.

“We expected they would be digging trenches this fall, and that we would have broadband fiber by the spring,” said **Erin Lipkind, Superintendent of Woodman School District 18**. “At some point, your shoulders start sagging. We’re a tiny little school. We want to focus our energies on education.”

Tester has been fighting to bring broadband to rural Montana, he recently secured a major investment to [expand wireless 4G LTE](#) for up to 50,000 square miles.

Woodman School students and teachers joined Bullock in working with the 2017 legislature to [create a state match](#) to leverage school broadband funds. Since 2015, Bullock has helped school districts make significant broadband upgrades, and now 90 percent of school districts in Montana are meeting minimum connectivity goals.

Tester and Bullock’s letter to Chairman Pai is available [HERE](#).

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