

March 17, 2023

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

For more than two years and for your entire term, the Federal Communications Commission has been in 2-2 deadlock, leaving the agency unable to make necessary progress to increase digital equity and media diversity, bolster online privacy and safety protection, and reassert its rightful authority over broadband to ensure everyone in the United States has access to this essential service.

Gigi Sohn was eminently qualified to serve as a commissioner. But after 16 months of organized and well-funded attacks by dark-money groups—which were carried out by lobbyists, enabled by complicit elected leaders, and amplified in partisan media—Sohn made the understandable decision to withdraw from consideration. And we are back where we started in January 2021.

Now, we call on you to immediately put forth a new nominee – specifically, one who has a history of advocacy for the public interest and is free of industry conflicts of interest; demonstrates a clear commitment to championing the rights of low-income families and communities of color; and supports Title II oversight and laws that ensure the FCC the authority to prevent unjust discrimination and promote affordable access.

Moreover, we ask you to actively press the Democratic majority in the Senate to swiftly confirm your nominee. We cannot permit Senators to prevent forward progress any longer at the behest of the very corporations the FCC is meant to regulate.

Urgent action is required on a number of fronts. The Trump administration’s repeal of net neutrality regulations in 2017 privileged the interests of enormous telecom companies. Far too many low-income households remain without consistent access to broadband. Women and people of color face overwhelming barriers as owners, workers and content creators in media, and yet we lack sufficient public data to track—let alone address—the problem. Millions pay predatory rates to communicate with incarcerated loved ones. And giant telecom and internet companies have spent exorbitant amounts lobbying to delay, loosen, or prevent regulations on how they use customers’ data. You have made clear that restoring and expanding responsible rules to govern the monopolies that dominate the digital sphere is a priority for your administration. Crucial to this objective is a fully functional FCC.

We implore you to take prompt action to restore regulatory control to the American people by expeditiously offering a new, strong nominee to the Senate who will champion our shared priorities.

Sincerely,

Access Humboldt
Alliance for Community Media
American Library Association
Appalshop Community Media Initiative
Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center
atAdvocacy
Barton-Garcia Advisors
Benton Institute for Broadband & Society
Blue Future
California Center for Rural Policy
California Clean Money Campaign
California Community Foundation Digital Equity Initiative
Center for Accessible Technology
Center for Digital Democracy
The Center for Digital Equity at Queens University of Charlotte
Center for Rural Strategies
Chamber of Progress
City of Boston, Massachusetts
City of Portland, Oregon
Common Cause
Community Tech Network
Computer Reach
ConnectWaukegan / ConnectLakeCounty
CreaTV San José
Demand Progress Education Fund
Detroit Community Technology Project
Digitunity
E2D - Eliminate the Digital Divide
Electronic Frontier Foundation
EveryoneOn
Fight for the Future
Free Press Action
Freedom BLOC

Future of Music Coalition
Generation Justice
The Greenlining Institute
HEARD
IBSA, Inc.
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
InterFaith Works of Central New York
Link Oregon
Kairos Action
Media Alliance
MediaJustice
Middle Tennessee State University
mohuman
National Digital Inclusion Alliance
New America's Open Technology Institute
NTEN
Other 98%
Open Media and Information Companies Initiative
OpenMedia
Our Revolution
Partners Bridging the Digital Divide
Progress America
Prometheus Radio Project
Public Knowledge
Revolving Door Project
Right Here, Right Now Project
RootsAction.org
Salina Media Connection
Sports Fans Coalition
Tech Goes Home
United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry
X-Lab