



June 22, 2026

Federal Communications Commission
45 L Street NE
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Comment on Ensuring Children's Safe Use of Screens and E-Rate-Funded Services Promoting Fair and Open Competitive Bidding in the E-Rate Program
Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, WC Docket Nos. 26-133, 13-184, 21-93, 21-455**

Dear Chairman Carr and Commissioners,

Independent Women submits this comment in support of the Federal Communications Commission's proposed review of the E-Rate program. Through our Education Freedom Center, we work to restore parental authority, promote transparency in schools, and ensure parents retain primary responsibility for directing their children's upbringing and education.

This proceeding provides an important opportunity to ensure that E-Rate-funded services advance educational achievement, respect parental authority, protect children's online safety, and promote responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources. Independent Women is dedicated to advancing policies that protect women's legal rights, equal opportunities, safety, and dignity—particularly for girls and young women.

Excessive Screen Time in Educational Settings Harms Children

Technology can be a valuable educational tool when used intentionally and for limited purposes. However, growing evidence suggests that excessive screen use often undermines learning. Research, including the 2026 U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the [Harms of Screen Use](#), documents clear links between heightened screen time and negative outcomes, including declining academic performance, reduced reading comprehension, and attention difficulties. The Advisory specifically warns that in classroom settings, multitasking with digital media interferes with concentration and negatively affects grades, test scores, and reading. Children now spend hours daily on screens in classrooms and libraries—environments where parental supervision is limited and federally subsidized technology is pervasive.

The Advisory notes that nearly half of all teenagers have experienced cyberbullying, and between 3.5% and 5% of children experience sextortion before adulthood. Girls are disproportionately affected by certain online risks associated with unrestricted device and internet access, including exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying, and sexual exploitation. No child should be subjected to such risks as a condition of accessing federally subsidized educational resources.

The E-Rate Program Must Reflect Parental Authority and Educational Purpose

Parents retain primary responsibility for their children's upbringing and education, and their authority should not be eroded by unfettered internet access at school. The E-Rate program is an approximately \$3 billion investment in expanding internet access to children at schools and libraries across the country. It must respect parental authority by ensuring that subsidized networks and services support genuine learning rather than allowing children to access distracting or harmful content. Over one in 10 school-aged children [surveyed](#) reported not just accessing pornography and other inappropriate content at school, but on school-issued devices, possibly provided for through this program. Federal programs that allow schools and children's libraries to become unregulated digital environments ignore the biological, psychological, and developmental realities of childhood.

This proceeding maintains connectivity while directing limited federal resources toward genuine educational outcomes and child protection. By increasing oversight, streamlining processes, and addressing waste, fraud, and abuse, the Commission can preserve the program's core mission and honor Congress's intent in authorizing the program.

Conclusion

Independent Women strongly supports the FCC's review of the E-Rate program under Chairman Carr. The proceeding restores focus and clarity, protects children from excessive screen time and online harms during their most formative years, and reaffirms that federal programs must prioritize educational excellence and child safety in ways that empower parents as the primary decision-makers in their children's lives. We urge the Commission to finalize strong reforms without delay.

Respectfully submitted,



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President
Independent Women