

**From:** Felicia Jones  
**To:** [CA Broadband Council](#)  
**Subject:** Public Comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, December 15, 2020 2:00:42 PM

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December 15, 2020

Good Afternoon Chair Amy Tong and Broadband Council Members. My name is Felicia Jones, I am the Associate Director for Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement (COPE) based in the Inland Empire region of the state. COPE has a mission to develop the capacity of community leaders to revitalize the communities in which we live, work, and worship.

We join others in urging this body to listen to the voices of California's students, families, and community-based organizations who are disproportionately impacted by the digital divide and those who need additional support to meet our educational, health, and professional needs. The digital divide is further exacerbated in places like the Inland Empire where the digital infrastructure for broadband connectivity is severely underdeveloped. In order to ensure that our students and families have accessible, affordable, and reliable broadband connectivity, we recommend you work to:

- a. Expand coverage within rural, tribal, and underserved low-income communities in order to prevent digital redlining.
- b. Invest in long-term broadband connectivity solutions that build out future proof networks and infrastructure such as those proposed by Legislators during the 2020 Legislative session.
- c. Secure intermediate and on-campus public accessibility through wifi integrated parking lots, safe on-campus learning centers, or cell on wheels
- d. Increase marketing and accessibility of reduced-cost/free broadband access programs and develop qualifying low-income metrics for postsecondary students such as Cal Grant, Pell, or CA Dream Act eligibility.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**Felicia Jones**  
Associate Director  
COPE

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