

Heinrich meets with FCC Commissioner on tribal broadband, net neutrality

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., met with Federal Communications Commission Commissioner Mignon Clyburn April 24 to discuss improving access to high-speed internet in Tribal communities and protecting net neutrality.

“Access to a free and open internet is essential to fostering innovation and education, and promoting civic engagement,” Heinrich said. “Commissioner Clyburn has been a champion of defending net neutrality and closing the digital divide in our rural and Tribal communities. I’m pleased to have the opportunity to work with Commissioner Clyburn on improving broadband infrastructure and grateful for her support for our Tribal communities.”

Earlier in April, Senator Heinrich convened a panel with the American Library Association and Commissioner Clyburn on improving access to high-speed internet in Tribal and rural communities.

The Tribal Connect Act, a bipartisan bill Heinrich introduced with U.S. Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., would improve broadband infrastructure and connectivity in Indian Country. The bill would improve and increase access to the FCC’s \$4 billion schools and libraries universal service support program, known as E-rate, and establishes a \$100 million Tribal E-rate pilot program for broadband access in Indian Country to tribes without libraries. While most of the nation’s public libraries have received E-rate support, only an estimated 15 percent of Tribal libraries have received critical E-rate funds.

Heinrich is a cosponsor of a Congressional Review Act resolution to reinstate net neutrality. The Senate resolution has enough support to force an up or down vote on the Senate floor, and is just one vote away from the simple majority of 51 senators needed for passage.

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