



National Lieutenant Governors Association

Friday, August 14, 2009

National Broadband Policy Must Focus on Adoption and Use

NLGA, NACo, State and Local Organizations Urge Strategy

Encouraging Americans to Use Broadband

Washington, D.C. – America is wired for broadband and now requires a national strategy focused on helping Americans adopt this game-changing 21st century technology, according to organizations representing thousands of state and local elected officials in all 50 states.

In a letter being sent tomorrow to key federal lawmakers, the National Lieutenant Governors Association, the National Association of Counties, and seven other organizations will tell Congress that America's national broadband plan should focus on overcoming the social and economic obstacles preventing adoption of high-speed Internet service.

“The facts are very clear: Over 90% of U.S. households are able to access at least one wireline broadband service, and 98% of Americans live in a zip code served by two or more providers,” the letter states. **“What is also clear, however, is that while broadband adoption is clearly on the rise, only 63% of households now have broadband in the home. For certain demographic groups, the adoption rate is well below 50%. ... This indicates that there are other barriers that need to be addressed.”**

The letter's delivery coincides with the due date of the first round of applications for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants under the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program and Broadband Initiatives Program. The programs are to help non-adopters overcome societal barriers to adoption: low levels of income and educational attainment, lack of computer ownership in the home, and a perceived lack of relevant content. Studies from the Pew Internet & American Life Project have shown that roughly half of the 37% of Americans who do not subscribe to broadband today are unaware of how the technology can be of practical use to them.

The organizations applaud Congress for funding at least \$250 million for initiatives that will educate and train non-broadband adopters on the benefits of the technology.

“We ask your respective committees to work with the Federal Communications Commission to develop a national broadband strategy which will give every American household the ability and incentive to adopt broadband, and take advantage of the opportunities it will bring,” the letter concludes.

The following organizations signed the letter, which will be delivered on Friday to Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-WV), House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Henry Waxman (D-CA), Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-VT), House Judiciary Committee Chairman John Conyers (D-MI) and the ranking members of each committee:

National Lieutenant Governors Association
National Association of Counties
American Legislative Exchange Council
National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials
National Black Caucus of State Legislators

National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Association of Black County Officials
Women in Municipal Government
National Conference of Hispanic Legislators

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About the Organizations

The National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), organized in 1962, is the professional association for the elected officials who are first in line of succession to the governors in the 50 states and US territories (see www.nlga.us) .

The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation's 3,066 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public's understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. NACo's membership totals more than 2,000 counties, representing over 80 percent of the nation's population.

The National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) primary mission is to develop, conduct and promote educational, research and training programs designed to enhance the effectiveness of its members, as they consider legislation and issues of public policy which impact, either directly or indirectly upon "the general welfare" of African American constituents within their respective jurisdictions.

American Legislative Exchange Council formed in 1973. Its membership consists of more than 2,400 conservative State Legislators across the U.S. that drafts and adopts model legislation that is often drafted into law. Their membership represents more than 30% of all of the State Legislators in the United States.

The National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (NHCSL) was founded in 1989 as a non partisan organization representing over 300 elected Hispanic State legislators through out the United States, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Since its founding, the NHCSL's primary mission has been to organize Hispanic state legislators who advocate on behalf of Hispanic communities across the United States.

The National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC-LEO) was created in 1970 to represent the interests of African American elected officials. NBC-LEO's objectives include increasing African American participation on the NLC's steering and policy committees to ensure that policy and program recommendations reflect African American concerns and benefit their communities.

Founded 2005 in Atlanta, Georgia, the National Conference of Hispanic Legislators is a nonpartisan, individual membership association of Latino state legislators who have come together to promote Jeffersonian conservative principles within the Hispanic community. By developing and promoting policies that reflect the principles of limited government, free markets, federalism and individual liberty, we strive to make the conservative voice of the Hispanic/Latino community heard in our state legislatures.

NABCO was formed in 1975 to provide an organizational structure for black county officials to review, share and develop responses to local and national issues. NABCO works to improve resources utilization, and to promote the sharing of knowledge and methods to improve government operations.

Women in Municipal Government (WIMG) strives to raise awareness about issues of concern to women, and it encourages women to seek public office in their communities. WIMG was formed in 1974 to serve as a forum for communication and networking among women municipal officials and their colleagues.

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