

For Immediate Release:

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SIIA Applauds President Obama's ConnectEd Proposal, Encourages FCC Action to Expand E-Rate for Schools and Libraries

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 18, 2013) – The Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), the principal trade association for the software and digital content industries, today commended President Obama for his ConnectEd proposal to enhance highspeed broadband connectivity for the nation's schools and libraries. Specifically, the President recently called on the FCC to modernize and leverage its existing E-Rate program to meet that goal.

SIIA President Ken Wasch commented: "The nation's students and schools require modern tools to compete in an increasingly digital, connected and competitive world. SIIA applauds President Obama for his proposal to enhance the E-Rate program to ensure all students and educators can realize the educational benefits made possible by technology. SIIA calls on the Federal Communications Commission to act swiftly to ensure these increased resources can quickly and effectively be directed to teaching and learning objectives."

Most significantly, the President's ConnectEd proposal calls on the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to modernize and leverage the existing E-Rate program to within five years connect 99 percent of America's students through next-generation broadband (at speeds no less than 100Mbps and with a target of 1Gbps) to, and high-speed wireless within, their schools and libraries. E-Rate funding has been relatively flat at \$2.25 billion since its creation in 1996, while the need for, and the demand for, connectivity has grown dramatically. Notably, the President's proposal identifies the need to "Build on Private-Sector Innovation" to "allow our teachers and students to take full advantage of feature-rich educational devices... and high-quality educational software (including applications)."

At SIIA's April policy forum (in conjunction with educator groups CoSN, ISTE and SETDA), FCC Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel announced a related package of proposed changes to the E-Rate to increase its funding and improve its administration.

SIIA supports and has championed increased public investments in education targeted to both improve access to, and enhance the use of, educational technologies. Learning technologies are needed to improve educational opportunities, student engagement and the personalization of learning. Yet, SIIA's soon to be released 2013 Vision K-2- educator survey results found that, while their goal for access to robust bandwidth is 3.98 (on a 1-4 scale), educators rate their actual access as only 3.14. Similarly, their need for ubiquitous, wireless access to resources and services ranks as a 3.89, but their actual access is only a 2.64.

About SIIA

SIIA is the leading association representing the software and digital content industries. SIIA represents approximately 700 member companies worldwide that develop software and digital information content. Information technology (IT) and software security are critical issues to SIIA's members, many of whom strive to develop safe, secure and state-of the-art products that effectively serve their commercial and government customers alike, while protecting their intellectual property. For further information, visit www.siia.net.