



TO: The Communications Workers of America

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RE: Attitudes Toward a National High-Speed Internet Build-Out
Findings from a Survey of Likely November, 2008 Registered Voters

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This analysis is based on 1000 interviews among likely 2008 general election voters nationwide. The survey was conducted July 11-15, 2007. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points at the 95% level of confident. The margin of error for subgroups varies and is higher.

Despite a Digital Divide, the Internet Is an Increasingly Important and Useful Tool for Registered Voters

The United States is in the throws of a technology divide. More than half (52%) of American voters currently are connected to a form of high speed Internet in their home. However, a large minority (47%) are not. This gap is most pronounced by a developing rural/urban divide, with voters in densely populated areas of the country more likely to be connected to high speed broadband than those in rural regions.

Registered Voters Connected to High Speed Internet	
Suburban	63%
Urban	53%
Small town	51%
Rural areas	32%
TOTAL	52%

The vast majority of voters in the United States value the Internet and believe it has become an important every day household tool. Americans nearly universally believe that the Internet offers many important opportunities and services. Around nine in 10 voters believe it is important that

Why the Internet Is Important According to Registered Voters	
	% "Important"
It helps with homework and research for school	90%
You can get medical information	90%
It offers access to many different news sources	90%
It offers limitless information	89%
It helps communicate with friends or family	89%
It saves time	87%
It is global	87%
It helps find jobs	87%

the Internet “helps with homework and research for school,” “offers limitless information,” “saves time,” is global,” allows them to “get medical information,” “offers access to many difference news sources,” “helps communicate with family” and “helps find jobs.”

These findings are consistent across all major demographic groups and in places where high speed Internet access is not available.

Americans Strongly Support the Proposal to Expand High Speed Internet Access to Communities Around the Nation

Support for Build-Out Requirements By Party ID	% That Says “favor”		
	Rep.	Ind.	Dem.
Require telecommunications companies to offer high speed access across their entire service areas, including low-income areas of the country	74%	73%	81%
Develop a set of standards and a reporting mechanism that consumers can use to evaluate the speed and reliability of the high speed Internet services on the market	68%	70%	75%
Right now, there is not a clear understanding of what parts of the country have access to high-speed Internet. This proposal would create a high speed Internet map of the country to see where people do and do not have access and determine the speed and cost in each location	65%	67%	75%
Require telecommunications companies to offer high speed access across their entire service areas, including rural areas of the country	64%	66%	75%
Alter the Universal Service Fund, a fee we all pay on our telephone bills that was originally intended to expand phone service. In addition to using it to pay for expanded telephone service to rural and low income areas, it would now pay for expanded high speed Internet service to these same places	63%	59%	70%

Voters were asked whether they favored or opposed various proposals to expand national high speed Internet build-out. In nearly every case, more than two-thirds of respondents support Internet expansion proposals.

Over three-quarters (77%) of the electorate favor build-out requirements to low-income areas. Seven in 10 (72%) favor reporting mechanisms for reliability and speed. A

similar number (70%) desire the creation of a high-speed Internet map to document which portions of the country have and do not have service. Two-thirds favor altering the Universal Service Fund (64%) to help finance the build-out.

The components of a proposed Internet build-out are clearly popular with this electorate. Furthermore, they receive bipartisan support. More than six in 10 self-identified Republicans, Independents and Democrats support each one of the building blocks for a nation-wide Internet build-out plan mentioned above.