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**Civil Rights Organizations File Brief Supporting Efforts to Equalize Access to Broadband Services**

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**NEW YORK, NY and WASHINGTON, DC** – A group of civil and workers’ rights organizations have filed an amicus brief in *Minnesota Telecom Alliance v. Federal Communications Commission (FCC)*, a case currently before the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals pertaining to a recent FCC rule aimed at ensuring equitable access to broadband services.

In the brief, the Legal Defense Fund, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, the American Civil Liberties Union, Communications Workers of America, and the United Church of Christ Office of Communication highlight that communities of color, low-income communities, and rural communities often lack access to quality, affordable broadband service. This “digital divide” has real consequences, making it more difficult for these communities to access employment opportunities, education, health care, and social connection in our increasingly online world. The organizations also defend the FCC’s authority to enforce a rule preventing practices that perpetuate unequal access to broadband.

In November 2023 – in response to the mandate set forth in the bi-partisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) – the FCC adopted a rule to prevent digital discrimination based on “income level, race, ethnicity, color, religion, or national origin,” as it relates to accessing broadband services. The rule prohibits both intentional discrimination and the use of policies or practices that impose unnecessary barriers on consumers’ access to broadband. Representatives of the telecommunications industry challenged the rule, claiming Congress did not give the FCC authority to address discriminatory impact in consumers’ broadband access.

The brief explains that the FCC’s interpretation of the IIJA is consistent with the Supreme Court’s reading of other federal antidiscrimination statutes and emphasizes that businesses across the country have long complied with similar civil rights protections without detriment to their operations.

To learn more about the historical causes behind today’s digital divide and other arguments in support of the FCC’s Digital Discrimination rule, you can read the brief [here](#).

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Founded in 1940, the **Legal Defense Fund (LDF)** is the nation's first civil rights law organization. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.

**Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC's** mission is to advance the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and to build and promote a fair and equitable society for all. Founded in 1991 in Washington, D.C., Advancing Justice | AAJC is a voice for the Asian American community with the federal government, fighting for civil rights through education, litigation, and public policy advocacy, and empowering our communities by bringing local and national constituencies together and ensuring Asian Americans are able to participate fully in our democracy.

For more than 100 years, the **American Civil Liberties Union** has worked in courts, legislatures, and communities to protect the constitutional rights of all people. With a nationwide network of offices and millions of members and supporters, the ACLU takes on the toughest civil liberties fights in pursuit of liberty and justice for all.

The **Communications Workers of America** represents working people in telecommunications, customer service, media, airlines, health care, public service and education, manufacturing, tech, and other fields. CWA envisions a universal broadband future where no one is left behind, with robust investment in a next-generation network that creates good jobs and connects all people.

The United Church of Christ, Office of Communication, Inc. (UCC OC Inc.) is the **United Church of Christ Media Justice Ministry**. The UCC is a faith community rooted in justice that recognizes the unique power of the media and technology to shape public understanding and thus society. Established in 1959, the ministry established the right of all citizens to participate at the Federal Communications Commission as part of its efforts to ensure a television broadcaster in Jackson, Mississippi served its African-American viewers during the civil rights movement and continues to press for media justice and communication rights today.