

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2018

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sanford Bishop
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration,
and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member Bishop,

As you work to develop the Fiscal Year 2019 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we write to express our strong support for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant program.

The DLT grant program assists rural communities in acquiring distance learning and telemedical technologies so that local teachers and medical service providers can connect to educators and medical professionals in other parts of the country. Since 1994, the DLT grant program has helped to establish hundreds of distance learning and telemedicine systems, improving the quality of life for thousands of residents in rural communities all across the United States.

DLT specifically helps rural communities invest in telecommunications-enabled information, audio and visual equipment, and advanced technologies to assist its residents in accessing educational and health care services. Recipients have used the program to provide distance learning paramedic courses to first responders, improve access to specialty health education, and establish partnerships between rural high schools and community colleges. Recent DLT recipients plan to use the grants to help address opioid abuse treatment and mental health counseling.

These educational and health services are vital. DLT grants enable rural communities to overcome any barriers they face in accessing healthcare or education, including long travel distances or a shortage of providers. Given the critical importance of these programs, we urge you to fully fund USDA's Distance Learning and Telemedicine grant program in FY19.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



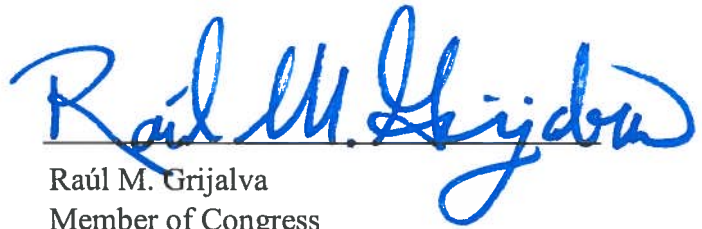
Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress



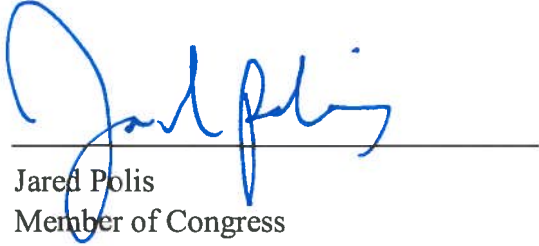
Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



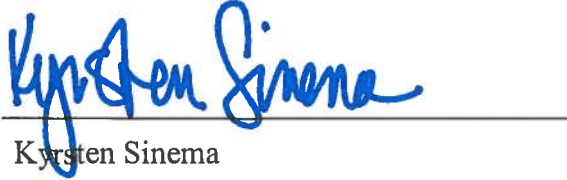
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