



NASSAU-SUFFOLK SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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TO: Representatives Ackerman, Bishop, Israel, King and McCarthy

FROM: Jeannette Santos, President
Jim Kaden, Legislation Committee Chair

RE: S.241
Federal E-Rate Legislation

The E-Rate program, created through the Telecommunications Act of 1996, provides over \$2 million annually to make internet access and other telecommunications services affordable for public and private schools and libraries. For the 2003 funding year New York State received just over \$437 million.

Last August, the FCC determined that the Universal Service Administrative Company that administers the E-Rate must abide by government accounting standards and therefore be covered by the federal Anti Deficiency Act (ADA). The accounting change forced USAC to halt new spending for E-Rate until it could raise sufficient upfront cash. The freeze in requests for aid left school districts scrambling to pay for their technology needs. In December 2004, Congress enacted legislation (H.E. 5419) to continue the E-Rate by exempting it for 12 months from the ADA.

In an effort to secure a permanent exemption and assure that funding disruptions do not occur later this year, New York Senators Schumer and Clinton are among 29 co-sponsors of S.241, a bipartisan effort to permanently exempt the E-Rate component of the Universal Service Fund from the accounting requirements of the ADA.

House sponsorship is critical. Nassau-Suffolk School Boards Association urges the Long Island Congressional Delegation to support the effort to protect the E-rate funding that has been so beneficial to Long Island's schools and libraries.

