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- The New York Times
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Key Points

1. Strong majorities of American Voters support proposals to expand access to broadband internet through congressional action

2. Over 60% of American Voters think broadband access proposals should be an “Immediate” concern for Congress

3. When given messaging about paying more to expand broadband access, a more modest majority (averaging 55%) across all 4 messages support the proposal

4. 95% of American Voters say that broadband access for students and teachers is a problem

5. Similarly, 91% say broadband access in rural areas is a problem, with 63% saying it is a “major problem”

Methodology:

This poll was conducted between September 1-September 2, 2020 among a national sample of 1938 Registered Voters in the US. The interviews were conducted online and the data were weighted to approximate a target sample of Adults based on age, gender, educational attainment, race, and region. Results from the full survey have a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points.
Landscape
Internet Use in COVID-19

Access to Service
Awareness of Issues Surrounding Access

Support for Proposals
Support and Opposition for Proposals
Expanding Access
Unsurprisingly, more than 2 in 3 American Voters say they are using their home internet more frequently since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Would you say that since the start of the coronavirus crisis, you are using your home internet:

- A lot more: 44%
- Somewhat more: 25%
- About the same: 30%
- Somewhat less: 1%
- A lot less: 0%
Home internet satisfaction is nearly unanimous at the moment with 92% of American Voters satisfied, and a majority (51%) very satisfied.

Overall, since the start of the coronavirus crisis, how would you rate your satisfaction with your home internet?
Half of American Voters say they are working from home at least rarely, with about 1 in 4 saying they work from home a lot

Here are some activities you or someone in your household might use the internet for. For each, please rate over the last four months how often each activity is done online in your household?

- Working from home
- Remote learning for a student who cannot go to their K-12 school
- Looking for a new job
- Remote learning for a student who cannot go to their college or technical school
- Learning a new skill related to your current job or that will help get a new job
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A strong majority of American Voters have heard about poor quality internet service during COVID-19, but less than 1 in 4 say they have heard “a lot”

Since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, how much have you read, seen, or heard about people who have poor quality internet service or do not have any internet service that has caused problems for their day-to-day lives?
A strong majority (63%) say that rural broadband access is a major problem, and 91% of American Voters say it is at least a minor problem.

According to the FCC's latest data, at least 18 million Americans live in areas without access to high-speed broadband internet infrastructure – nearly a quarter of Rural America and more than half of some counties. Do you think this is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?
95% of American Voters think high-speed internet access for students and teachers is a problem, with 3 in 4 (76%) saying it is a major problem.

Since the start of the coronavirus crisis, more than 55 million students and teachers have had to move their classrooms online and start remote learning, but according to the latest data, 12 million students in the United States either don’t have access or their family can’t afford high-speed internet. Do you think this is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem?
Nearly unanimous majorities say each tested use case for access is important; however, issues involving required access, such as workers and students garner more intense support with 3 in 4 (78%) saying it is very important to have access to high-speed broadband.

Here are some groups of people who might not currently have access to high-speed broadband internet but might need better access because of the coronavirus outbreak. For each group, please rate how important you think it is for them to get access to high-speed broadband.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Not that important</th>
<th>Not at all important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers who are required to work from home</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students who are now having to do remote learning online</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small businesses that need to sell their goods online to stay afloat</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People who are sick and could schedule a telehealth appointment</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural communities where there is no broadband access</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers who are recently unemployed who need to look for a new job</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with lower incomes who cannot afford broadband internet access</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors who use their internet to stay connected with their friends</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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90% of American Voters support Congressional funds expanding broadband access, with a plurality (48%) strongly supporting the initiative.

Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose Congress using federal funds to expand broadband internet network infrastructure to reach those living in areas not currently serviced by a broadband internet provider?
American Voters see this as an urgent need, with 62% saying Congress should act immediately on this proposal

And is this something Congress should do:

- Immediately: 62%
- In the next 9-18 months: 23%
- In the next 2-3 years: 7%
- Not at all: 9%
Support for Congress subsidizing broadband internet access in low-income families is also high with nearly half of American Voters “strongly” supporting.

Would you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose Congress creating new programs and increasing federal funding for existing programs that either partially subsidize or provide free broadband internet access to those who cannot currently afford it, including students in low-income families?

- **Strongly support**: 49%
- **Somewhat support**: 39%
- **Somewhat oppose**: 7%
- **Strongly oppose**: 4%
Similar to the proposal for reaching American Voters who currently lack broadband, 85% say that a proposal to subsidizes broadband to those who cannot afford it is something Congress should “immediately” do.

And is this something Congress should do:

- 62% Immediately
- 23% In the next 9-18 months
- 6% In the next 2-3 years
- 9% Not at all
The message saying “help” rather than “subsidize” performs slightly better but overall there are very little differences between Message A and B with both showing a modest majority in favor of the proposals.

Which statement most accurately reflects your opinion:

A Message
I would be willing to pay a little more to subsidize internet access for those who cannot otherwise afford it.

Support | Oppose
---|---
52% | 48%

B Message
I would be willing to pay a little more for internet access to help those who cannot otherwise afford it.

Support | Oppose
---|---
55% | 45%
A and B messages show small differences in support among American Voters with both garnering a modest majority in favor of the proposal.

Which statement most accurately reflects your opinion:

**A Message**
- I would be willing to pay a little more to subsidize internet infrastructure being deployed to those living in areas that otherwise would not have access. 56% Support, 44% Oppose

**B Message**
- I would be willing to pay a little more for internet access to help internet infrastructure be deployed to those living in areas that otherwise would not have access. 54% Support, 46% Oppose