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Can you imagine a life without electricity? For most people, the answer is probably no. What about a life without broadband Internet?

It would mean: no emails; no ability to quickly look up health information for managing your diabetes or helping your sick child; no way to pay bills, search for jobs, or take classes online. When you stop to think about it, one thing becomes clear: access to fast and reliable broadband is just as essential now as electricity was during the last century.

But millions of Americans still don't have access to affordable broadband services. Specifically, rural, low-income and people of color are getting left behind. A mere 47% of households with annual income below \$25,000 have been able to access broadband services. And only 64% of African Americans and 53% of Hispanics have access to broadband.

The divide between Americans who have access and those left behind is too great. But this divide can be bridged with the Federal Communications Commission's recent proposal to expand the Lifeline program to include broadband. The Lifeline program was established in 1985 under President Ronald Reagan to help low-income Americans have access to affordable communications. Under President George W. Bush, the program was updated to include both wireline and wireless technology.

It's time to bring it up to date again. The FCC is on the right track as it explores new ways to modernize the program. Conservatives also understand the benefits of extending the Lifeline program to include broadband Internet. Earlier this year, the president of Free State Foundation, Randolph May, testified before the Senate and said, "Lifeline is the most targeted means of providing subsidies to those truly in need of assistance." Modernizing this vital program will strengthen our economy. Research shows that broadband adoption in the home improves household income, leads to more employment opportunities and increases independence. And strong, thriving households lead to strong, thriving communities.

Access to broadband also has implications for democracy. It lets people join conversations that directly impact their own communities. Increasingly, communities of color rely on broadband services to mobilize powerful movements and public voices on important issues such as immigration and the rights of low-wage workers. Groups such as Color of Change and Voto Latino come immediately to mind. "Black Lives Matter" is a recent example of a movement that was born online. It has helped bring together tens of thousands across the country to rally against police brutality. It has connected voices not just in major cities such as New York, San Francisco and Chicago, but in countless smaller communities. It has helped individuals unite and collectively speak out against

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injustices.

Expanding the Lifeline program to include broadband would further elevate underrepresented voices and spur civic engagement. This is exactly what our country needs to help close the digital divide and ensure that everyone -- no matter who they are or where they live -- has a chance to improve their life and provide for their loved ones.

The FCC gets this. We understood this under President Reagan's administration and President George W. Bush's administration. Now it's up to our current policymakers to back this up, too. – **CNN.com op-ed**

Time Warner Cable Inc. said profit fell 7.2% in its latest quarter, as higher programming costs and a pension expense offset higher revenue and subscriber growth.

The New York-based cable company in May struck a deal to be acquired by Charter Communications Inc. for \$55 billion. The transaction, backed by cable mogul John Malone's Liberty Broadband Corp., follows a failed merger attempt with Comcast Corp. Time Warner and Charter have said they expect to complete the deal by the end of the year.

On Thursday, Chief Executive Rob Marcus said Time Warner intends to use the time between the signing and closing of the Charter deal to further strengthen its operations. The company said higher programming costs cut into second-quarter profit. Those costs jumped 11% from a year earlier, driven by higher content costs at SportsNet LA, a regional sports network carrying the Los Angeles Dodgers' baseball games. Contractual rate increases, the carriage of new networks and higher costs per video subscriber also lifted programming costs during the quarter. The company also recorded a \$27 million increase in its pension expenses.

Time Warner Cable said its added 66,000 residential customers overall—what it calls its best-ever second quarter and its first rise in any quarter since 2008. The cable operator added 172,000 high-speed data subscribers and 252,000 voice subscribers, while it lost 45,000 video subscribers in the second quarter. In all for the June quarter, Time Warner reported a profit of \$463 million, or \$1.62 a share, down from \$499 million, or \$1.76 a share, a year earlier. Excluding items, per-share profit decreased to \$1.54 from \$1.89. Revenue rose 3.5% to \$5.93 billion. Analysts had predicted \$1.81 in earnings per share on \$5.94 billion in revenue. – **Wall Street Journal**



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