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United States Senate

July 18, 2017

Anne Hazlett
Assistant to the Secretary
for Rural Development
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC 20250

*RE: Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association Application for Funding from the FY 2017
Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program*

Dear Ms. Hazlett:

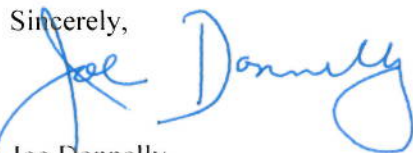
One of my responsibilities as Senator from Indiana and a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry is to encourage and facilitate the overall sustainability of our rural areas. I am pleased that rural communities, through innovative programs like the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) grant program, have the opportunity to access the most current educational programs and curricula to present to their students and teachers. For this reason, I support the application from The Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association (ISRSA) for funding from the DLT program.

In collaboration with the East Central Educational Service Center, ISRSA proposes to purchase distance learning equipment in order to provide diverse learning opportunities for rural students living in Dubois, Fayette, Martin, Jennings, Newton, Randolph and Switzerland counties. In addition, the Mohawk and Catawba Indiana Nations have joined the collaboration to provide opportunities for connection and the study of Native American cultures.

As you are likely aware from your work with the Office of Community and Rural Affairs here in Indiana, approximately 1 in 4 Hoosier students are located in a rural school district. Many of these young people have limited travel opportunities due to lack of transportation, family and work commitments, and lack of financial resources. A robust distance learning program will give these students, teachers, and staff the opportunity to expand their horizons through increased educational offerings including dual credit, AP, foreign language and STEM courses, tutoring, shared presenters, cultural enrichment, improved special education and counseling services, as well as professional development options for teachers and administrators.

I respectfully request that you give this application for DLT funding full and fair consideration, in a manner consistent with U.S. law and public policy. I would appreciate being notified when a decision is made. Questions and announcements can be directed to my office by contacting Marianne Black at Marianne_Black@donnelly.senate.gov or by telephone at (317) 226-5555. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator