

# U.S. Rep. Kind: Selected for House task force on rural broadband expansion

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*Task Force aims to end rural-digital divide by 2025*

**WASHINGTON** – Today, **U.S. Rep. Ron Kind** announced his selection as a member of the new House of Representatives Task Force on Rural Broadband. The Rural Broadband Task Force will work to create new legislation to expand rural broadband access in order to end the rural-digital divide by 2025.

“Wisconsin students, small businesses, and families in rural communities rely on broadband to stay connected in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century – but many have been left behind,” said **Rep. Ron Kind**. “I am proud to join the Rural Broadband Task Force, and look forward to working on real solutions that help communities across western and central Wisconsin access affordable, high-speed internet.”

The Rural Broadband Task Force is chaired by **House Majority Whip James. E. Clyburn**.

“I’m pleased that Representative Kind is joining the House Task Force on Rural Broadband to ensure that all Americans can compete in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy,” said **House Majority Whip James Clyburn**. “High-speed internet is an essential service in America today—yet too many of our fellow citizens in rural communities are being left behind. It’s unacceptable in 2019 that many rural communities have

limited to no access to the internet. If rural America is to thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century information economy, it must have affordable and accessible internet service to every community.”

More than \$60 billion in public resources have been invested to bring broadband to rural America; however, the FCC reports 25 million rural Americans are still without high-speed internet access. High-speed internet is a modern-day necessity and every American should have the ability to access affordable high-speed internet.

Wisconsin ranks 36th of America’s most connected states, with 1/5 of the state’s population considered “underserved” or with limited access to high-speed internet. Over 899,000 people in Wisconsin have access to only one internet provider, with nearly 200,000 people living in communities without any wired internet providers.

The Task Force will consult with key stakeholders, including rural advocates, market participants, local governments, and Administration officials to develop strategies to eliminate digital deserts and ensure rural Americans can thrive in the 21st century information economy. Top priorities include:

- Highlighting success stories and innovative approaches;
- Ensuring that federal funding for rural broadband is spent effectively;
- Identifying necessary steps to position the United States to lead the world in universal broadband deployment; and
- Passing legislation to advance a transformative agenda on rural broadband that accomplishes the goal of affordable universal access by 2025.