

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Ministers Launch Petition Drive to Bring Benefits of Broadband to Communities in Need as Quickly as Possible**

*Orlando, FL* – Today, the Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD) announced a petition drive to encourage policymakers to support steps that will expedite implementation of President Obama’s National Broadband Plan, particularly in lower income and rural communities. The group will collect signatures at events in states nationwide and online. In Orlando, MAADD kicked off the effort at Senator Siplin’s Back to School Drive at Jones High School on August 13<sup>th</sup>.

Last year, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) developed and released a National Broadband Plan aimed at expanding affordable broadband capability to all citizens -- even in economically challenged and rural areas across the U.S. Efforts are currently underway to implement this plan, but with millions of Americans still unconnected in an increasingly digital society, MAADD feels that time is of the essence.

“A broadband connection has become a necessity in our daily lives. Those with a connection have a world of opportunity in front of them, while those without are being left behind,” said Reverend Derrick McRae, President of the Florida Chapter of MAADD. “With the creation of a National Broadband Plan, President Obama’s Administration has proven that it understands the value of broadband and has made it a priority for all communities to be connected. This plan is too important to our communities. Our communities can’t wait. Therefore, it is critical that we accelerate the implementation of this ambitious Plan.”

MAADD’s petition calls on President Obama to support the following steps to accelerate the implementation of the National Broadband Plan to benefit many economically challenged communities across the country as quickly as possible:

- Fast-track the implementation of the proposed wireless spectrum auctions to increase the availability of faster high speed wireless Internet service.
- Promote private investment in broadband through corporate incentives such as the approval of the AT&T/T-Mobile merger which will bring state-of-the-art wireless broadband investment to more than 97% of Americans without increasing the deficit or spending taxpayer money.
- Speed up the overhaul of the Universal Service Fund to facilitate the rapid expansion of broadband service to high cost areas.
- Support projects that will implement broadband more aggressively in the healthcare industry and in our nation’s energy grids to drive down costs for consumers.

MAADD’s petition can be viewed online [here](#).

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*The Ministerial Alliance Against the Digital Divide (MAADD) is a next generation civil rights organization led by ministers devoted to bridging the Digital Divide and promoting personal and economic development in low-income and minority communities across the country.*