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Artist's Statement

“Right to Internet Access”

In a letter to Samuel Kercheval, dated July 12, 1816, Thomas Jefferson said that he is “certainly not an advocate for frequent and untried changes in laws and constitutions. ... But [he] know[s] also, that laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, ..., as new discoveries are made, ..., institutions must advance also, and keep pace with the times.” In our times, the development of technology, and specifically the internet, requires a change to the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Constitution should be amended to include the right to internet access for all U.S. citizens.

According to a 2020 Brookings Institution article entitled “5 steps to get the internet to all Americans”, the internet is “the most powerful and pervasive platform in the history of the planet.” It is a source for news and information. From employment to social communication, from healthcare to business development, the internet impacts nearly all areas of our lives, making access to it no longer optional but essential. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this necessity was highlighted in education. For example, a research study published by the RAND corporation found that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, students' lack of internet access was one of the biggest instructional challenges for teachers as it inhibited their ability to communicate with students and their families.

By protecting individual rights and liberties, the Bill of Rights was an initial step in moving our country towards “a more perfect Union.” Internet access allows people to more fully exercise many of the rights and liberties found in the Bill of Rights, including freedom of speech and the right to assemble. A 2016 Resolution adopted by the United Nations' Human Rights

Council identifies internet access as a human right and a tool for “fostering citizen and civil society participation.” Internet access ensures the opportunity for U.S. citizens to participate more fully in their government and to connect to others as citizens of the world.

The U.S. Constitution should be amended to include the right to internet access for all U.S. citizens, ensuring that all those who want it have the means to get it. Equal access will provide equal opportunity, so just as the Bill of Rights did at the founding of our country, the right to internet access will continue to move our country towards a “more perfect Union.”

My drawing submission addresses the contest questions by illustrating how amending the U.S. Constitution to include the right to internet access will provide all U.S. citizens with the opportunity to more fully exercise many of the rights and liberties found in the Bill of Rights and elsewhere.

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