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## Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday – May 26, 2020

### PHOENIX CENTER ANALYZES EFFECTS OF COVID PANDEMIC ON BROADBAND SPEEDS ACROSS THE GLOBE

#### *Slower Networks and Networks in Lower-Income Countries See Largest Declines While U.S. Networks Prove Resilient*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – COVID-19 has forced the residents of many nations to shelter-in-place, either by choice or by mandate. As a result, Internet use has skyrocketed, putting stress on both fixed and mobile broadband networks. In a new study released today entitled *COVID-19 and Broadband Speeds: A Multi-Country Analysis*, Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford looks for the impacts of rising Internet use on download speeds for fixed and mobile networks across the globe.

Using weekly speed data for fixed and mobile networks from Ookla before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Ford finds some sizable reductions in speed for several countries, but also some increases in speed. Larger negative effects appear more often for lower-income countries with slower networks, with a few exceptions. Some higher income countries, including France, have seen statistically-significant drops in download speeds for both fixed and mobile networks.

For the United States, Dr. Ford's results were particularly encouraging. Dr. Ford found that fixed networks in the United States were resilient to the traffic surges; there were no statistically-significant changes in download speeds. Mobile networks in the United States, alternately, were found to have a statistically-significant increase in download speeds.

“While we see some statistically-significant reductions in broadband speeds in many counties, the changes often are not very large,” explains Phoenix Center Chief Economist and study author Dr. George S. Ford. “Importantly, U.S. networks proved resilient to the rise in Internet traffic as Americans weathered the COVID storm.”

A full copy of PHOENIX CENTER POLICY BULLETIN NO. 49, *COVID-19 and Broadband Speeds: A Multi-Country Analysis*, may be downloaded free from the Phoenix Center's web page at: <https://www.phoenix-center.org/PolicyBulletin/PCPB49Final.pdf>.

*The Phoenix Center is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that studies broad public-policy issues related to governance, social and economic conditions, with a particular emphasis on the law and economics of the digital age.*