



**PHOENIX** FOR ADVANCED  
LEGAL & ECONOMIC  
C E N T E R PUBLIC POLICY STUDIES  
www.phoenix-center.org

5335 Wisconsin Avenue, NW  
Suite 440  
Washington, D.C. 20015-0234  
Tel: +1 (202) 274-0235  
Fax: +1 (202) 318-4909  
[www.phoenix-center.org](http://www.phoenix-center.org)

## Press Release

Contact: Lawrence J. Spiwak  
Phone: +1 (202) 274-0235

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Thursday - March 21, 2024

### NEW PHOENIX CENTER ANALYSIS FINDS NO MATERIAL CHANGE IN BROADBAND AVAILABILITY UNDER FCC'S NEW 100/20 Mbps THRESHOLD

*Study finds changes in availability of broadband are no more than 3%*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In its latest *Section 706 Report*, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) raised the speed threshold for what it considers to be broadband service from 25/3 Mbps to 100/20 Mbps, the first change in the threshold since 2015. Naturally, by raising the speed threshold, the FCC has, in effect, told consumers that while they may have had access to “broadband” on Wednesday, they do not have it on Thursday (the change was adopted on a Thursday) — even though they continue to receive service.

How does the FCC’s decision to raise the speed threshold alter broadband availability statistics? In a new analysis released today entitled *What Are the Effects of Changing the Definition of Broadband?*, Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford estimates the reduction in broadband availability resulting from the FCC’s redefinition of broadband using data from the National Broadband Map (June 2023).

Dr. Ford finds that the changes in availability of broadband are quite small (no more than about 3%), though some modalities are materially affected (e.g., some satellite services); however, the reduction in the number of providers is larger, as many modalities cannot satisfy the new speed threshold. For fixed providers, the reduction in “broadband” providers falls by approximately eleven percent (11%).

That said, Dr. Ford notes that “this reduction in the number of providers able to meet the new threshold may lead to claims about a reduction in the degree of broadband competition, but such claims are false. Such speed thresholds are arbitrary, even if necessary, and for definitional purposes alone; they do not reflect competitive dynamics.”

A full copy of PHOENIX CENTER POLICY PERSPECTIVE NO. 24-03, *What Are the Effects of Changing the Definition of Broadband?*, may be downloaded free from the Phoenix Center’s web page at: <http://www.phoenix-center.org/perspectives/Perspective24-03Final.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.*