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Press Release

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PHOENIX CENTER RESEARCH SHOWS BROADBAND PRICES ARE FALLING, NOT RISING

New Economic Analysis Finds Competing Claims Over FCC Data Resolved by Proper Price Index Methods

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In a new analysis released today entitled *Are Broadband Prices Rising? The Perils of Naïve Price Comparisons*, Phoenix Center Chief Economist Dr. George S. Ford demonstrates that real broadband prices declined materially between 2024 and 2025. Analyzing data from the Federal Communications Commission’s Urban Rate Survey (“URS”), Dr. Ford finds that properly measured broadband prices fell approximately 7% to 9% in real terms over the study period.

Dr. Ford’s analysis stands in stark contrast to a recent analysis by the Benton Foundation which claims that the same FCC data reveal a 4.8% real price increase. But as Dr. Ford details, the Benton Foundation analysis contains numerous analytical errors and thus the results are not credible. As Dr. Ford notes: “The data tell a clear story once you analyze them correctly. Broadband prices are falling in real terms, and falling by a meaningful amount. Claims to the contrary reflect methodological error, not market reality.”

Dr. Ford’s paper also highlights an important gap in the FCC’s data: the URS excludes the low-income discount plans offered by major providers, such as Comcast’s Internet Essentials (75 Mbps for \$14.99) and AT&T’s Access program (up to 100 Mbps for \$30 per month). As a result, the URS data cannot be used to evaluate the affordability of broadband for low-income households specifically.

“Method matters,” Dr. Ford concludes, “and in this case, the methodological distinctions have direct policy implications. Claims of rising broadband prices are not supported by properly measured price trends.”

A full copy of PHOENIX CENTER POLICY PERSPECTIVE NO. 26-02, *Are Broadband Prices Rising? The Perils of Naïve Price Comparisons*, may be downloaded free from the Phoenix Center’s web page at: <https://phoenix-center.org/perspectives/Perspective26-02Final.pdf>.

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