

115TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H.R. 3994

To establish the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

October 6, 2017

Mr. Tonko (for himself and Mr. Lance) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To establish the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth, and for other purposes.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Advancing Critical
- 5 Connectivity Expands Service, Small Business Resources,
- 6 Opportunities, Access, and Data Based on Assessed Need
- 7 and Demand Act" or the "ACCESS BROADBAND Act".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE OFFICE OF INTERNET 2 CONNECTIVITY AND GROWTH. 3 Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall establish 5 the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth within the National Telecommunications and Information Adminis-7 tration. SEC. 3. DUTIES. 9 (a) Outreach.—The Office shall— 10 (1) connect with communities that need access 11 to high-speed internet and improved digital inclusion 12 efforts through various forms of outreach and com-13 munication techniques; 14 (2) hold regional workshops across the country 15 to share best practices and effective strategies for 16 promoting broadband access and adoption; 17 (3) develop targeted broadband training and 18 presentations for various demographic communities 19 through various media; and 20 (4) develop and distribute publications (includ-21 ing toolkits, primers, manuals, and white papers) 22 providing guidance, strategies, and insights to com-23 munities as the communities develop strategies to 24 expand broadband access and adoption. 25 (b) Tracking of Federal Dollars.—

- (1) Broadband infrastructure.—The Office shall track the construction and use of any broadband infrastructure built using any Federal support in a central database.
 - (2) ACCOUNTING MECHANISM.—The Office shall develop a streamlined accounting mechanism by which any agency offering a Federal broadband support program and the Commission through the Universal Service Fund shall provide the information described in paragraph (1) in a standardized and efficient fashion.
 - (3) Report.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every year thereafter, the Office shall make public on the website of the Office and submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the following:
 - (A) A description of the work of the Office for the previous year and the number of residents of the United States that received broadband as result of Federal broadband support programs and the Universal Service Fund program.

- 1 (B) A description of how many residents of
 2 the United States were provided broadband by
 3 which universal service mechanism or which
 4 Federal broadband support program.
 5 (C) An estimate of the accommission project of
- C) An estimate of the economic impact of such broadband deployment efforts on the local economy, including any effect on small businesses or jobs.

9 SEC. 4. STREAMLINED APPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORT.

- 10 (a) AGENCY CONSULTATION.—The Office shall con-
- 11 sult with any agency offering a Federal broadband support
- 12 program to streamline and standardize the applications
- 13 process for such program.
- 14 (b) AGENCY STREAMLINING.—Any agency offering a
- 15 Federal broadband support program shall amend their ap-
- 16 plications for broadband support, to the extent practicable
- 17 and as necessary, to streamline and standardize applica-
- 18 tions for Federal broadband support programs across the
- 19 Government.
- 20 (c) Single Application.—To the greatest extent
- 21 practicable, the Office shall seek to create one application
- 22 that may be submitted to apply for all, or substantially
- 23 all, Federal broadband support programs.
- 24 (d) Website Required.—Not later than 180 days
- 25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Office shall

- 1 create a central website through which potential applicants
- 2 can learn about and apply for support through any Fed-
- 3 eral broadband support program.

4 SEC. 5. COORDINATION OF SUPPORT.

- 5 The Office, any agency that offers a Federal
- 6 broadband support program, and the Commission through
- 7 the Universal Service Fund shall coordinate with the Of-
- 8 fice to ensure that support is being distributed in an effi-
- 9 cient manner, in a financial sustainable manner, with the
- 10 goal of serving the largest number of persons in the
- 11 United States while promoting the most job and economic
- 12 growth for all residents of the United States.
- 13 SEC. 6. DEFINITIONS.
- 14 In this Act:
- 15 (1) AGENCY.—The term "agency" has the
- meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5,
- 17 United States Code.
- 18 (2) Assistant secretary.—The term "Assist-
- ant Secretary' means the Assistant Secretary of
- 20 Commerce for Communications and Information.
- 21 (3) Commission.—The term "Commission"
- means the Federal Communications Commission.
- 23 (4) Federal broadband support pro-
- 24 GRAM.—The term "Federal broadband support pro-
- 25 gram" does not include any Universal Service Fund

- program and means any of the following programs

 (or any other similar Federal program) to the extent
 the program offers broadband internet service for
 residential, commercial, or academic establishments:
 - (A) The Telecommunications and Technology Program of the Appalachian Regional Commission.
 - (B) The Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans and Loan Guarantees, the Rural Broadband Access Loans and Loan Guarantees, the Substantially Underserved Trust Areas Provisions, the Community Connect Grant Program, and the Distance Learning and Telemedicine Grant Program of the Rural Utilities Service of the Department of Agriculture.
 - (C) The Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs and the Planning and Local Technical Assistance Programs of the Economic Development Administration of the Department of Commerce.
 - (D) The Community Development Block Grants and Section 108 Loan Guarantees, the Funds for Public Housing Authorities: Capital Fund and Operating Fund, the Multifamily Housing, the Indian Community Development

- Block Grant Program, the Indian Housing
 Block Grant Program, the Title VI Loan Guarantee Program, Choice Neighborhoods, the
 HOME Investment Partnerships Program, the
 Housing Trust Fund, and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 - (E) The American Job Centers of the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor.
 - (F) The Native American Library Services
 Basic Grants, the Native American Library
 Services Enhancement Grants, the Native Hawaiian Library Services Grants, the Laura
 Bush 21st Century Librarian Program, the National Leadership Grants for Libraries, and the
 Sparks! Ignition Grants for Libraries of the Office of Library Services of the Institute of Museum and Library Services.
 - (5) Office.—The term "Office" means the Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth established pursuant to section 2.
 - (6) Universal Service Fund program.—The term "Universal Service Fund program" means any program authorized under section 254 of the Com-

- 1 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) to help deploy broadband.
- (7) UNIVERSAL SERVICE MECHANISM.—The
 term "universal service mechanism" means any
 funding stream provided by a Universal Service
 Fund program to support broadband access.

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