

TELECOMMUNICATIONS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

Resolution TST-21-15

A RESOLUTION ON EXPANDING BROADBAND ACCESS IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports expanding broadband access in communities of color and other underserved areas;

WHEREAS, according to the Pew Research Center, Blacks and Hispanics in the United States are significantly less likely than Whites to have a computer and broadband internet access at home;

WHEREAS, Pew Research reports one in four teens in households with an annual income under \$30,000 lack access to a computer at home, compared with just 4 percent of those in households earning over \$75,000;

WHEREAS, Blacks and Hispanics are more likely depend on smartphones as their sole source of access to the internet, making it difficult to complete school assignments and difficult to work from home;

WHEREAS, State and local governments have a duty to ensure that families have stable housing by extending moratoriums on evictions and foreclosures during this Covid-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, whether in-person schooling is possible or not, remote learning access is a critical component in educating children in modern society parents and all levels of government and enterprise should partner to provide reliable internet service and electronic devices to children.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports that US Congress creating the national groundwork including funding for infrastructure for connectivity in the identified communities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL urges employers to develop plans that allows parents and guardians to have flexible, paid time to assist their children with remote learning when schools are closed and remote learning is necessary, and to ensure homework assignments and teacher contact via the internet is available;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL supports internet service providers collaborating with stakeholders in the areas identified in this resolution and to develop plans to provide connectivity to broadband services;

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the NBCSL believes that Congress should appropriate funding in a technology neutral manner to provide:

- 1) wired or wireless connectivity;
- 2) service equipment such as modems, routers, and hotspots;
- 3) incentivize distribution of devices such as tablets, computers, and smartphones that may act as hotspots; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials and agencies as appropriate.

SPONSOR: Representative K.C Ohaebosim (KS)

Committee of Jurisdiction: Telecommunications, Science, and Technology Policy Committee

Certified by Committee Co-Chairs: Representative K.C Ohaebosim (KS) and Senator Audrey Gibson (FL)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2020

Ratification is certified by: Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter (SC), President