

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY

## Resolution TST-17-04

### **A RESOLUTION URGING THE FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION TO MODERNIZE THE LIFELINE PROGRAM TO ADDRESS THE HOMEWORK GAP**

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) supports policies that help to close the digital divide and make it easier for low-income households with school-age children to have access to broadband Internet;

WHEREAS, research suggests roughly seven in ten teachers assign homework that requires access to the Internet;

WHEREAS, children of color and low-income students are at a disadvantage without online access in order to do school work;

WHEREAS, Pew Research analysis of the Census data finds that the lowest-income households have the lowest home broadband subscription rates;

WHEREAS, according to a 2015 Pew Research Center analysis of U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey data, there are 29 million households with school-aged children nationwide and approximately 5 million of those households do not have high-speed internet service at home;

WHEREAS, low-income households, especially black and Hispanic ones, make up a disproportionate share of that 5 million;

WHEREAS, roughly one-third (31.4 percent) of households whose incomes fall below \$50,000 and with children ages 6 to 17 do not have a high-speed internet connection at home; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has initiated a rule-making process to extend the Lifeline Program, an Initiative that subsidizes telephone subscriptions for low-income households, to allow recipients to apply support the cost of their broadband subscription.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) urges the FCC to modernize its Lifeline Program to allow participants to support broadband Internet service;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, NBCSL urges the FCC to make licensed and unlicensed spectrum more readily available for wireless broadband, which includes Wi-Fi, so that there are more opportunities for students to get their school work done; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, the Chairman and Commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission, and other federal, state, and local government officials, as appropriate.

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SPONSOR: Senator Valencia Seay (GA)

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

Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Senator Anastasia Pittman (OK)

Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2016

Ratification is certified by: Senator Catherine Pugh (MD), President