

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 103

BY REPRESENTATIVE SCHEXNAYDER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the United States Congress to support the extension of funding for the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) of 2021, which provides our citizens with access to broadband services.

WHEREAS, in August of 2019, by executive order, Governor John Bel Edwards created the Broadband for Everyone in Louisiana commission. This commission facilitates private sector providers, public entities, and other broadband stakeholders to improve both the adoption and availability of broadband service for Louisiana residents by providing universal access to broadband service; and

WHEREAS, during the 2020 Second Extraordinary Session of the Legislature of Louisiana, the legislature created the office of broadband and connectivity within the governor's office to promote and encourage broadband adoption for households in an effort to eliminate the digital divide in Louisiana by 2029; and

WHEREAS, the office of broadband and connectivity's mission is to coordinate federal, state, and municipal efforts by identifying best practices and tactics necessary in their goal; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, as part of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act's historic investment in broadband infrastructure and digital equity, Congress appropriated more than fourteen billion dollars for the ACP; and

WHEREAS, Congress assigned the Federal Communications Commission to administer the ACP, the successor program to the Emergency Broadband Benefit, which helped almost nine million households afford internet access during the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, under the ACP, eligible households can receive up to thirty dollars per month discount toward internet services and up to seventy-five dollars per month for households on qualifying tribal lands; and

WHEREAS, eligible households may also receive a one-time discount of up to one hundred dollars to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana was the first state to receive broadband award approval from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and is number one in the nation for ACP enrollment with an estimated forty-six percent of eligible households enrolled; and

WHEREAS, currently, there are more than nine hundred thousand eligible households within the state that may qualify for the ACP and four hundred and twenty-two thousand, two hundred and fifty-seven households that have enrolled; and

WHEREAS, based on current take rates, the more than fourteen billion dollars in funding appropriated for the ACP program could be exhausted in late 2023 or early 2024; and

WHEREAS, the ACP has been a critical tool in helping bridge the "digital divide" that exists between those who have access to modern information and communications technology and those who do not.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation to support continued funding of the ACP so that low-income Louisiana households can continue to receive the support they need to participate in the digital marketplace.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE