

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1046

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 4, 2019

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Mr. GARDNER, Mr. JONES, Mr. JOHNSON, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mrs. BLACKBURN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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”.

8 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

9 In this Act:

1 (1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the
2 meaning given that term in section 551 of title 5,
3 United States Code.

4 (2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assist-
5 ant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of
6 Commerce for Communications and Information.

7 (3) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
8 means the Federal Communications Commission.

9 (4) FEDERAL BROADBAND SUPPORT PRO-
10 GRAM.—The term “Federal broadband support pro-
11 gram” does not include any Universal Service Fund
12 program and means any of the following programs
13 (or any other similar Federal program) to the extent
14 the program offers broadband internet service or
15 programs for promoting broadband access and adop-
16 tion for various demographic communities through
17 various media for residential, commercial, or com-
18 munity providers, or academic establishments:

19 (A) The Telecommunications and Tech-
20 nology Program of the Appalachian Regional
21 Commission.

22 (B) The following programs of the Rural
23 Utilities Service of the Department of Agri-
24 culture:

1 (i) The Telecommunications Infra-
2 structure Loan and Loan Guarantee Pro-
3 gram.

4 (ii) The Rural Broadband Access
5 Loan and Loan Guarantee Program au-
6 thorized under section 601 of the Rural
7 Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C.
8 950bb).

9 (iii) The Substantially Underserved
10 Trust Area Initiative.

11 (iv) The Community Connect Grant
12 Program established under title III of the
13 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and
14 Drug Administration, and Related Agen-
15 cies Appropriations, 2004 (division A of
16 Public Law 108–199; 118 Stat. 19).

17 (v) The Distance Learning and Tele-
18 medicine Grant Program under section
19 2333 of the Food, Agriculture, Conserva-
20 tion, and Free Trade Act of 1990 (7
21 U.S.C. 950aaa–2).

22 (C) The following programs of the Eco-
23 nomic Development Administration of the De-
24 partment of Commerce:

1 (i) The Public Works and Economic
2 Adjustment Assistance Programs.

3 (ii) The Planning and Local Technical
4 Assistance Programs.

5 (D) The following programs of the Depart-
6 ment of Housing and Urban Development:

7 (i) The Community Development
8 Block Grant Program under title I of the
9 Housing and Community Development Act
10 of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.).

11 (ii) The loan guarantee program
12 under section 108 of the Housing and
13 Community Development Act of 1974 (42
14 U.S.C. 5308) (commonly known as the
15 “Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program”).

16 (iii) Assistance from the Public Hous-
17 ing Capital Fund established under section
18 9(d) of the United States Housing Act of
19 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437g(d)).

20 (iv) Assistance from the Public Hous-
21 ing Operating Fund established under sec-
22 tion 9(e) of the United States Housing Act
23 of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437g(e)).

24 (v) The Multifamily Housing Pro-
25 grams.

1 (vi) The Indian Community Develop-
2 ment Block Grant Program.

3 (vii) The Indian Housing Block Grant
4 Program under section 101 of the Native
5 American Housing Assistance and Self-De-
6 termination Act of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4111).

7 (viii) Loan guarantees under title VI
8 of the Native American Housing Assist-
9 ance and Self-Determination Act of 1996
10 (25 U.S.C. 4191 et seq.) (commonly known
11 as the “Title VI Loan Guarantee Pro-
12 gram”).

13 (ix) The Choice Neighborhoods Initia-
14 tive.

15 (x) The HOME Investment Partner-
16 ships Program authorized under title II of
17 the Cranston-Gonzalez National Affordable
18 Housing Act (42 U.S.C. 12721 et seq.).

19 (xi) The Housing Trust Fund estab-
20 lished under section 1338 of the Federal
21 Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and
22 Soundness Act of 1992 (12 U.S.C. 4568).

23 (xii) The Housing Opportunities for
24 Persons With AIDS Program authorized

1 under the AIDS Housing Opportunity Act
2 (42 U.S.C. 12901 et seq.).

3 (E) The American Job Centers of the Em-
4 ployment and Training Administration of the
5 Department of Labor.

6 (F) The Library Services and Technology
7 Grant Programs of the Institute of Museum
8 and Library Services.

9 (5) OFFICE.—The term “Office” means the Of-
10 fice of Internet Connectivity and Growth established
11 under section 3.

12 (6) UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND PROGRAM.—The
13 term “Universal Service Fund program” means any
14 program authorized under section 254 of the Com-
15 munications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) to help de-
16 ploy broadband.

17 (7) UNIVERSAL SERVICE MECHANISM.—The
18 term “universal service mechanism” means any
19 funding stream provided by a Universal Service
20 Fund program to support broadband access.

21 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF OFFICE OF INTERNET**
22 **CONNECTIVITY AND GROWTH.**

23 Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment
24 of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall establish the Of-
25 fice of Internet Connectivity and Growth within the Na-

1 tional Telecommunications and Information Administra-
2 tion.

3 **SEC. 4. DUTIES.**

4 (a) **OUTREACH.**—The Office shall—

5 (1) connect with communities that need access
6 to high-speed internet and improved digital inclusion
7 efforts through various forms of outreach and com-
8 munication techniques;

9 (2) hold regional workshops across the United
10 States to share best practices and effective strategies
11 for promoting broadband access and adoption;

12 (3) develop targeted broadband training and
13 presentations for various demographic communities
14 through various media; and

15 (4) develop and distribute publications (includ-
16 ing toolkits, primers, manuals, and white papers)
17 providing guidance, strategies, and insights to com-
18 munities as the communities develop strategies to
19 expand broadband access and adoption.

20 (b) **TRACKING OF FEDERAL DOLLARS.**—

21 (1) **BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE.**—The Of-
22 fice shall track the construction and use of and ac-
23 cess to any broadband infrastructure built using any
24 Federal support in a central database.

1 (2) ACCOUNTING MECHANISM.—The Office
2 shall develop a streamlined accounting mechanism
3 by which any agency offering a Federal broadband
4 support program, and the Commission through the
5 Universal Service Fund, shall provide the informa-
6 tion described in paragraph (1) in a standardized
7 and efficient fashion.

8 (3) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
9 date of enactment of this Act, and every year there-
10 after, the Office shall make public on the website of
11 the Office and submit to the Committee on Com-
12 merce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate
13 and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the
14 House of Representatives a report on the following:

15 (A) A description of the work of the Office
16 for the previous year and the number of resi-
17 dents of the United States who received
18 broadband access as a result of a Federal
19 broadband support program or a Universal
20 Service Fund program.

21 (B) The number of residents of the United
22 States described in subparagraph (A), broken
23 down by the Federal broadband support pro-
24 gram or universal service mechanism to which
25 the broadband access was attributable.

1 (C) An estimate of the economic impact of
2 the broadband deployment efforts described in
3 subparagraphs (A) and (B) on the local econ-
4 omy in areas receiving assistance through those
5 efforts, including any effect on small businesses
6 or jobs.

7 **SEC. 5. STREAMLINED APPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORT.**

8 (a) AGENCY CONSULTATION.—The Office shall con-
9 sult with any agency offering a Federal broadband support
10 program to streamline and standardize the application
11 process for grants or other financial assistance from the
12 program.

13 (b) AGENCY STREAMLINING.—Any agency offering a
14 Federal broadband support program shall amend the ap-
15 plication for broadband support from that program, to the
16 extent practicable and as necessary, to streamline and
17 standardize applications for Federal broadband support
18 programs across the Federal Government.

19 (c) SINGLE APPLICATION.—To the greatest extent
20 practicable, the Office shall seek to create 1 application
21 that may be submitted to apply for all, or substantially
22 all, Federal broadband support programs.

23 (d) WEBSITE REQUIRED.—Not later than 180 days
24 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Office shall
25 create a central website through which a potential appli-

1 cant can learn about and apply for support through any
2 Federal broadband support program.

3 **SEC. 6. COORDINATION OF SUPPORT.**

4 The Office, any agency that offers a Federal
5 broadband support program, and the Commission,
6 through the Universal Service Fund, shall coordinate with
7 each other to ensure that Federal support for broadband
8 is being distributed in an efficient, technology-neutral, and
9 financially sustainable manner, with the goal of serving
10 the largest number of persons in the United States while
11 avoiding overbuilding and promoting the most job and eco-
12 nomic growth for all residents of the United States.

13 **SEC. 7. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

14 Nothing in this Act is intended to alter or amend any
15 provision of section 254 of the Communications Act of
16 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254).

17 **SEC. 8. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**

18 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
19 priated to carry out this Act. This Act shall be carried
20 out using amounts otherwise authorized.

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