

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6394

To help small business broadband providers keep customers connected.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 25, 2020

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. MARSHALL, Mr. YOUNG, and Mr. GIANFORTE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Appropriations

A BILL

To help small business broadband providers keep customers connected.

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. KEEPING CRITICAL CONNECTIONS EMER-**
4 **GENCY FUND.**

5 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

6 (1) the term “Commission” means the Federal
7 Communications Commission;

8 (2) the term “covered program” means a pro-
9 gram established by a small business broadband pro-
10 vider under which the small business broadband pro-

1 vider, at any time during the COVID–19 emergency
2 period, voluntarily—

3 (A) provides a customer with free or dis-
4 counted broadband service, or free upgrades of
5 existing service to meet certain capacity and
6 speed needs, due specifically to the presence of
7 a student in the household of the customer who
8 needs distance learning capability; or

9 (B) refrains from disconnecting broadband
10 service provided to an existing customer due to
11 nonpayment or underpayment if the customer—

12 (i) has a household income, at the
13 time of the nonpayment or underpayment,
14 that does not exceed 135 percent of the
15 Federal poverty guidelines (as determined
16 by the Secretary of Health and Human
17 Services);

18 (ii) is unable to make a full payment
19 due specifically to the economic impact of
20 the national emergency described in para-
21 graph (3); and

22 (iii) provides sufficient documentation
23 to the provider to show that the customer
24 meets the criteria under clauses (i) and
25 (ii);

1 (3) the term “COVID–19 emergency period”
2 means the period during which the national emer-
3 gency declaration by the President under the Na-
4 tional Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 et seq.)
5 with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019
6 (COVID-19) is in effect; and

7 (4) the term “small business broadband pro-
8 vider” means a broadband provider that provides
9 broadband service to fewer than 250,000 customers.

10 (b) FUNDING.—

11 (1) APPROPRIATION.—Out of any funds in the
12 Treasury not otherwise appropriated, there is appro-
13 priated to the Commission \$2,000,000,000 for fiscal
14 year 2020, to remain available until expended, to re-
15 imburse small business broadband providers for the
16 costs of carrying out a covered program.

17 (2) RULES.—The Commission shall promulgate
18 rules on an expedited basis, and without regard to
19 section 553 of title 5, United States Code, regarding
20 the provision of reimbursements to small business
21 broadband providers under paragraph (1).

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