

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 32

Whereas, the Office of Broadband Development was established in 2018 as a partnership between the Department of Economic Development and the Department of Agriculture to build and strengthen partnerships between public and private stakeholders and align efforts statewide to improve broadband access; and

Whereas, the Office of Broadband Development is focused on addressing broadband availability and noninfrastructure barriers to full participation in the digital economy in Missouri by working with providers, communities, and stakeholders to expand and accelerate broadband deployment across the state; 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 Affordable Connectivity Program; and

Whereas, Congress assigned the Federal Communications Commission to administer the Affordable Connectivity Program (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 a discount of up to thirty dollars per month 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, currently there are more than four hundred thousand eligible households within the state of Missouri that may qualify for the ACP; and

Whereas, based on current take rates, the more than fourteen billion dollars in funding appropriated for the ACP could be exhausted in the spring of 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:

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the members of the Missouri Senate, One Hundred and Second General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby urge each member of the Missouri congressional delegation to support continued funding of the ACP so that low-income Missourians can continue to receive the support they need to participate in the digital marketplace; and

Be It Further Resolved that the Secretary of the Senate be instructed to prepare a properly inscribed copy of this resolution for Speaker of the House of Representatives Mike Johnson, Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, and the members of the Missouri congressional delegation.