

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 56th Legislature (2017)

3 SENATE BILL 528

By: Pittman

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to telecommunications; declaring that  
8 enhancing and expanding Internet capabilities is in  
9 state's best interest; making declarations on long  
10 term growth; providing statistical data; creating the  
Connect Oklahoma Broadband Development Program;  
11 requiring certain report by certain date; and  
12 providing for noncodification.

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

14 SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be  
15 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

16 It is the best interests of this state to promote and implement  
17 policies that enhance and expand Internet capabilities to all  
18 corners of the state and to all of its people along the economic  
19 spectrum.

20 Investment into strong broadband development encourages delivery  
21 of affordable services to ensure long term growth and efficient  
22 delivery of services by businesses, educational institutions,  
23 medical facilities and governmental entities.

1       According to an April 2015 study from the Pew Internet Research  
2 Center, forty-eight (48%) percent of smart-phone dependent Americans  
3 have closed their smart-phone services as the result of financial  
4 hardship resulting in a lack of broadband access to vital services  
5 such as healthcare, educational and job opportunities and  
6 communications. Free data plans, also known as sponsored data or  
7 zero rating, enable consumers to access certain content without it  
8 being counted against their allotted data. Free data effectively  
9 works to reduce financial hardships of low-income consumers by  
10 reducing the cost of access to certain content thereby staying  
11 digitally connected to healthcare, educational and job opportunities  
12 and communications.

13       Oklahoma should continue to work and comply with the Federal  
14 Communications Commission (FCC) regulations in order to expand our  
15 Internet ecosystem. The FCC has initiated a rule making process to  
16 extend the Lifeline Program, which is an initiative to subsidize  
17 telephone subscriptions for low-income households and allow  
18 recipients to apply for support for the cost of their broadband  
19 subscription. Pew Research analysis of the census data finds that  
20 the lowest income households have the lowest home broadband  
21 subscription rates. There are twenty-nine million (29,000,000)  
22 households with school-aged children nationwide and approximately  
23 five million (5,000,000) of those households do not have high-speed  
24 Internet service at home.

1 SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be  
2 codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

3 A. This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Connect  
4 Oklahoma Broadband Development Program".

5 B. The Oklahoma Corporation Commission is directed to produce a  
6 report providing information detailing the regulatory compliance  
7 issues of the state and the Commission relating to  
8 telecommunications both at the federal and state level and  
9 identifying those regulations that are deemed beneficial and those  
10 that are problematic for development of services. The report shall  
11 be delivered to the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the  
12 Speaker of the House of Representatives by May 1, 2018.

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