

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6407

To require the Administrator of General Services to transfer certain surplus computers and technology equipment to nonprofit computer refurbishers for repair and distribution, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 17, 2018

Mr. GARRETT (for himself, Mr. PETERSON, Mr. DONOVAN, Mr. WITTMAN, Mr. WALZ, Mr. PERLMUTTER, and Ms. STEFANIK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

A BILL

To require the Administrator of General Services to transfer certain surplus computers and technology equipment to nonprofit computer refurbishers for repair and distribution, 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 “Computers for Vet-
5 erans and Students Act of 2018” or the “COVS Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) Access to computers and computer tech-
2 nology are indispensable for success in the 21st cen-
3 tury. Millions of Americans do not regularly use a
4 computer and research shows that substantial dis-
5 parities remain in both internet use and the quality
6 of access with the digital divide concentrated among
7 older, less educated, less affluent populations, espe-
8 cially veterans, low-income students, and senior citi-
9 zens.

10 (2) In 1996, the President issued Executive
11 Order 12999 instructing the General Services Ad-
12 ministration (GSA) to allow schools and nonprofits
13 the ability to receive Federal surplus computers for
14 educational purposes.

15 (3) GSA created the Computers for Learning
16 Program, which distributes approximately 30,000
17 computers and computer-related equipment annually
18 to public schools and nonprofits for reuse.

19 (4) As a Federal program, Computers for
20 Learning has lagged in fulfilling its mission just as
21 the need for computer access for basic services and
22 education has skyrocketed.

23 (5) Computers for Learning has failed on three
24 fronts through waste (computers going to schools
25 and nonprofits that are not equipped to refurbish

1 them), abuse (multiple cases of theft or fraud in re-
2 cent years), and inefficiency (schools and nonprofits
3 that lack the capacity to refurbish on a regional or
4 national scale).

5 (6) Computers for Learning would benefit from
6 increased coordination by working directly with cer-
7 tified nonprofit computer refurbishers, the majority
8 of which are allied together under the Alliance for
9 Technology Reuse and Refurbishing (AFTRR).

10 (7) AFTRR members collectively refurbish and
11 put over 90,000 computers back into the community
12 annually from public and privately donated equip-
13 ment, closing the digital divide and diverting mil-
14 lions of pounds of potential e-waste from landfills.

15 (8) Each AFTRR member has “bridging the
16 digital divide” at the core of their respective mis-
17 sions. Collectively, they have decades of experience,
18 capacity, and knowledge in not only refurbishing
19 computers, but also, distributing them to people in
20 need, with many providing low-cost internet access
21 and digital literacy training. AFTRR members have
22 led the Nation in bridging the digital divide for
23 years, and in some cases, decades.

1 **SEC. 3. TRANSFER OF CERTAIN SURPLUS COMPUTERS AND**
2 **TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT TO NONPROFIT**
3 **COMPUTER REFURBISHERS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The head of a Federal agency,
5 through the Administrator of General Services, shall offer
6 to transfer any surplus computer or technology equipment
7 that is not being used internally by the Federal agency,
8 or has not been requested for use by another Federal
9 agency, to a nonprofit computer refurbisher for repair and
10 distribution to an educational institution, a veteran, an in-
11 dividual with a disability, a low-income individual, a stu-
12 dent, or a senior in need (as determined by the nonprofit
13 computer refurbisher).

14 (b) COLLABORATION WITH ALLIANCE FOR TECH-
15 NOLOGY REFURBISHING AND REUSE.—In carrying out
16 subsection (a), the Administrator of General Services shall
17 work directly with the Alliance for Technology Refur-
18 bishing and Reuse to establish a process through which
19 surplus computers and technology equipment will be
20 transferred to nonprofit computer refurbishers. Such proc-
21 ess shall be established not later than 60 days after the
22 date of the enactment of this Act.

23 (c) RETURN OF CERTAIN COMPUTERS AND EQUIP-
24 MENT.—In the case in which the Administrator of General
25 Services is not able to transfer a surplus computer or tech-
26 nology equipment to a nonprofit computer refurbisher

1 within 30 days after offering to transfer such computer
2 or equipment, the head of the Federal agency on whose
3 behalf the Administrator of General Services acted shall
4 dispose of such computer or equipment in accordance with
5 the procedures of such agency regarding the disposal of
6 Federal electronic assets.

7 (d) DUTIES OF NONPROFIT COMPUTER REFUR-
8 BISHERS.—

9 (1) TRAINING PROGRAMS.—Each nonprofit
10 computer refurbisher to whom the Administrator of
11 General Services transfers a surplus computer or
12 technology equipment under subsection (a) shall
13 offer training programs for educational institutions,
14 veterans, individuals with disabilities, low-income in-
15 dividuals, students, and seniors in need on the use
16 of computers and technology equipment.

17 (2) LEGAL COMPLIANCE.—Each nonprofit com-
18 puter refurbisher to whom the Administrator of
19 General Services transfers a surplus computer or
20 technology equipment under subsection (a) shall
21 comply with any Federal, State, or local law relating
22 to the disposition of e-waste.

23 (3) ANNUAL REPORTS TO AFTRR.—Each non-
24 profit computer refurbisher to whom the Adminis-
25 trator of General Services transfers a surplus com-

1 computer or technology equipment under subsection (a)
2 shall submit an annual report to the Alliance for
3 Technology Refurbishing and Reuse on any surplus
4 computer or technology equipment repaired or dis-
5 tributed by such refurbisher.

6 (e) PROHIBITION AGAINST TRACKING AND TIME
7 LIMITS.—Due to the unique condition of each surplus
8 computer or technology equipment, the Administrator of
9 General Services may not require a nonprofit computer re-
10 furbisher to repair and distribute any surplus computer
11 or technology equipment within a specific timeframe.

12 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

13 (1) EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—The term
14 “educational institution” means—

15 (A) any public or private child care center,
16 preschool, elementary school, secondary school,
17 or accredited institution of vocational, profes-
18 sional, or higher education; and

19 (B) in the case of an accredited institution
20 of vocational, professional, or higher education
21 composed of more than one school, college, or
22 department that is administratively a separate
23 unit, each such school, college, or department.

1 (2) NONPROFIT COMPUTER REFURBISHER.—
2 The term “nonprofit computer refurbisher” means a
3 nonprofit organization—

4 (A) whose primary mission and activity is
5 to bridge the digital divide;

6 (B) that is exempt from taxation under
7 section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of
8 1986; and

9 (C) that is a member of the Alliance for
10 Technology Refurbishing and Reuse.

11 (3) SENIOR.—The term “senior” means any in-
12 dividual who is 65 years of age or older.

13 (4) STUDENT.—The term “student” means any
14 individual enrolled in an educational institution, ex-
15 cluding a public or private child care center.

16 (5) TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT.—The term
17 “technology equipment” means physical assets re-
18 lated to computers and information technology, in-
19 cluding peripheral components, tablets, communica-
20 tion devices (such as routers, servers, and cell
21 phones), printers, scanners, uninterruptible power
22 sources, and cables and connections.

1 (6) VETERAN.—The term “veteran” has the
2 meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38,
3 United States Code.

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