SENATE RESOLUTION No. 82

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 7, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ District 29 (Essex and Hudson) Senator BRIAN P. STACK District 33 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Pou

SYNOPSIS

Urges United States Congress to renew funding for Affordable Connectivity Program.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/18/2024)

SR82 RUIZ, STACK

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1	A SENATE RESOLUTION respectfully urging the Congress of the
2	United States to renew funding for the Affordable Connectivity
3	Program.
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5	WHEREAS, Millions of Americans, many of whom are low-wage
6	earners or live in rural areas, are without access to broadband
7	Internet services; and
8	WHEREAS, Broadband is critical to everyday activities such as work,
9	school, and accessing healthcare; and
10	WHEREAS, Consequently, without access to broadband Internet
11	services, individuals struggle to improve social outcomes through
12	education, achieve upward economic mobility, gain digital literacy
13	skills, and receive quality healthcare; and
14	WHEREAS, To close the digital divide, in 2021, the Federal
15	Communications Commission (FCC) launched the Affordable
16	Connectivity Program (ACP), which provides a discount of up to
17	\$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and
18	up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands; and
19	WHEREAS, In addition, the program offers a one-time discount of up
20	to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from
21	participating providers, under specific circumstances, for eligible
22	households; and
23	WHEREAS, Since its inception, the ACP has helped to expand
24	broadband access to over 20 million households in the United
25	States; and
26	WHEREAS, In New Jersey, as of January 2024, 335,079 households are
27	enrolled in the ACP, which means that roughly one in 10
28	households in the State benefit from the program; and
29	WHEREAS, Since the ACP's launch in 2021, New Jersey alone has
30	received nearly \$152 million in ACP funding, resulting in \$8.3
31	million per month in collective cost savings on broadband Internet
32	services for all New Jersey households enrolled in the program; and
33	WHEREAS, However, the FCC announced that, without additional
34	funding from Congress, the ACP is slated to expire in April 2024
35	when the program is scheduled to exhaust its \$14.2 billion budget;
36	and
37	WHEREAS, To improve broadband access for millions of Americans,
38	and thereby advance social, economic, and health outcomes for the
39	underserved, Congress is respectfully urged to renew funding for
40	the Affordable Connectivity Program; now, therefore,
41	the Attordable Connectivity Program, now, therefore,
42	PE IT DESOLVED by the Senate of the State of New Jersey
42	BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the State of New Jersey:
43 44	1. This House respectfully urges the Congress of the United
44	
	States to renew funding for the Federal Communications Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program
46	Commission's Affordable Connectivity Program.

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2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and every member of Congress elected from this State.

STATEMENT

This resolution urges the Congress of the United States to renew funding for the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP).

Millions of Americans are without access to broadband Internet services. As a result, these individuals struggle to improve social outcomes through education, achieve upward economic mobility, gain digital literacy skills, and receive quality healthcare. In 2021, to close the digital divide, the FCC launched the ACP, which provides a discount of up to \$30 per month toward internet service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal lands. In addition, the program offers a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers, under specific circumstances, for eligible households. Currently, over 20 million households receive broadband benefits through the ACP. In New Jersey, as of January 2024, 335,079 households are enrolled in the program. Specifically, New Jersey has received nearly \$152 million in ACP funding, resulting in \$8.3 million per month in collective cost savings on broadband Internet services for all New Jersey households enrolled in the program.

However, the ACP is slated to expire in April 2024 when the program is scheduled to exhaust its \$14.2 billion budget. To improve broadband access for millions of Americans, and thereby advance social, economic, and health outcomes for the underserved, Congress is respectfully urged to renew funding for the ACP.