

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 42

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to continue in effect and expand the Lifeline Assistance Program and the Link Up Program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2007

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to continue in effect and expand the Lifeline Assistance Program and the Link Up Program, 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 “Serving Everyone with  
5 Reliable, Vital Internet, Communications, and Education  
6 Act of 2007”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 The Congress finds the following:

1           (1) Today’s telecommunications market offers  
2 consumers an array of social, economic, and edu-  
3 cational communications.

4           (2) Communications today also offer Americans  
5 better access to emergency assistance.

6           (3) It is essential to the Nation’s continued  
7 progress for all sectors of the population to have  
8 adequate access to telecommunications. America  
9 must work to reduce and ultimately eliminate the  
10 harmful technological divide.

11           (4) The Congress reaffirms the Nation’s public  
12 policy commitment to providing universal service. All  
13 consumers should have access to high-quality tele-  
14 communications services at affordable rates.

15 **SEC. 3. UNIVERSAL SERVICE.**

16           Subsection (j) of section 254 of the Communications  
17 Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) is amended to read as fol-  
18 lows:

19           “(j) LIFELINE ASSISTANCE; LINK UP AMERICA.—

20                   “(1) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this sub-  
21 section are—

22                           “(A) to advance universal service; and

23                           “(B) to ensure that high-quality tele-  
24 communications services and other evolving  
25 telecommunication technologies, such as Inter-

1 net access and broadband services, are available  
2 to low-income consumers at just, reasonable,  
3 and affordable rates.

4 “(2) CONTINUATION AND EXPANSION OF PRO-  
5 GRAMS.—For the purposes described in paragraph  
6 (1), the Commission—

7 “(A) shall continue in effect the Lifeline  
8 Assistance Program and the Link Up Program;  
9 and

10 “(B) expand such programs under para-  
11 graph (3).

12 “(3) EXPANSION.—The Commission shall ex-  
13 pand the assistance provided through the Lifeline  
14 Assistance Program and the Link Up Program by  
15 allowing low-income consumers participating in such  
16 programs to choose to use such assistance for any  
17 one of the following:

18 “(A) Wire or wireless telephone service.

19 “(B) Internet access service.

20 “(C) Wire or wireless broadband service.

21 “(D) Any evolving technology the Commis-  
22 sion deems consistent with the purposes de-  
23 scribed in paragraph (1).

24 “(4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—This sub-  
25 section shall not be construed—

1           “(A) to affect any program under this sec-  
2           tion other than the Lifeline Assistance Program  
3           or the Link Up Program; or

4           “(B) except as inconsistent with the provi-  
5           sions of this subsection, to affect the authority  
6           of the Commission to make modifications to the  
7           Lifeline Assistance Program or the Link Up  
8           Program.

9           “(5) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

10           “(A) The term ‘broadband service’ means  
11           high-speed Internet access service—

12                   “(i) offering integrated access to voice  
13                   communications, high-speed data service,  
14                   video-demand services, and interactive de-  
15                   livery services; and

16                   “(ii) transmitting data at speeds ex-  
17                   ceeding 200 kilobits per second, in at least  
18                   one direction, from the user’s computer to  
19                   the Internet or from the Internet to the  
20                   user’s computer.

21           “(B) The term ‘Lifeline Assistance Pro-  
22           gram’ means the Lifeline Assistance Program  
23           provided for by the Commission under subpart  
24           E of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (and  
25           any related or successor regulations).

1           “(C) The term ‘Link Up Program’ means  
2           the Link Up Program provided for by the Com-  
3           mission under subpart E of title 47, Code of  
4           Federal Regulations (and any related or suc-  
5           cessor regulations).”.

6 **SEC. 4. STUDY.**

7           (a) **STUDY.**—Not later than May 1, 2008, the Fed-  
8           eral Communications Commission shall conduct a study  
9           and submit a report to the Congress on the following:

10           (1) The necessary benefit level for a household  
11           participating in the Lifeline Assistance Program or  
12           the Link Up Program which will encourage low-in-  
13           come consumers to seek broadband service.

14           (2) Projections on the potential of new  
15           broadband service consumers who would seek this  
16           service if economically accessible.

17           (3) Industry requirements to provide broadband  
18           service access in underserved areas.

19           (4) Data that accurately illustrates the extent  
20           of current deployment of broadband service to resi-  
21           dential users.

22           (5) Policy proposals conducive to addressing  
23           gaps in broadband service availability.

24           (b) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section, the terms  
25           “broadband service”, “Lifeline Assistance Program”, and

1 “Link Up Program” have the meanings given to those  
2 terms in section 254(j) of the Communications Act of  
3 1934, as amended by section 3 of this Act.

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