

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1685

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to reform and modernize the
Universal Service Fund Lifeline Assistance Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 23, 2013

Ms. MATSUI (for herself, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. ESHOO, Ms. DEGETTE, Ms. LOFGREN, Mr. DOYLE, Mr. BEN RAY LUJÁN of New Mexico, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, and Mr. BUTTERFIELD) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to reform and
modernize the Universal Service Fund Lifeline Assistance
Program.

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 “Broadband Adoption
5 Act of 2013”.

6 **SEC. 2. BROADBAND LIFELINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

7 Section 254(j) of the Communications Act of 1934
8 (47 U.S.C. 254(j)) is amended—

1 (1) by striking “(j) LIFELINE ASSISTANCE.—
2 Nothing in this” and inserting the following:

3 “(j) LIFELINE ASSISTANCE.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this”; and

5 (2) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(2) BROADBAND LIFELINE ASSISTANCE PRO-
7 GRAM.—

8 “(A) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this para-
9 graph is to promote the adoption of broadband
10 service by all people of the United States while
11 recognizing that the price of broadband service
12 is one of the barriers to adoption for low in-
13 come households.

14 “(B) ESTABLISHMENT.—

15 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than
16 270 days after the date of enactment of
17 the Broadband Adoption Act of 2013, the
18 Commission shall adopt a final rule estab-
19 lishing Lifeline program support for
20 broadband that enables qualifying low-in-
21 come customers residing in urban and
22 rural areas to purchase broadband service
23 at reduced charges by reimbursing pro-
24 viders who elect to participate in the pro-
25 gram for each such customer served. The

1 Commission shall consider the results of
2 the Low-Income Broadband Pilot Program
3 when establishing such final rule.

4 “(ii) MODEL.—Such program shall be
5 similar in structure to the Lifeline pro-
6 gram for basic telephone service under
7 subpart E of part 54 of title 47, Code of
8 Federal Regulations. Qualifying individuals
9 may elect to apply support from the Life-
10 line program to basic telephone service,
11 voice telephony service, or broadband serv-
12 ice, whether each service is purchased
13 stand-alone or in a bundle.

14 “(iii) DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM.—
15 The Commission shall consider providing a
16 preference to participating broadband serv-
17 ice providers that include components in-
18 volving digital literacy programs as part of
19 their offerings.

20 “(C) STATE MATCHING FUNDS.—The
21 Commission may determine, in consultation
22 with the Federal-State Joint Board instituted
23 under subsection (a)(1), whether State match-
24 ing funds may be provided as a condition of eli-

gibility for low-income households within such State.

“(D) AMOUNT OF SUPPORT.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Commission, in calculating the amount of Lifeline support to be provided to each low-income household, shall routinely study the prevailing market price for broadband service and the prevailing speed of broadband service adopted by households.

“(ii) INFORMATION.—To fulfill the requirement under clause (i), the Commission shall rely on information that it routinely collects or that is publicly available.

“(E) TECHNOLOGY NEUTRAL.—

“(i) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall ensure that the program established under subparagraph (B)(i) is neutral as to the types of technology used to provide voice telephony or broadband service under the Lifeline program to promote competition from service providers to qualify under such program.

“(ii) AUTHORIZATION.—A participating broadband service provider need not

1 be an eligible telecommunications carrier to
2 receive support under such program, but
3 such provider shall obtain authorization
4 from the Commission in order to partici-
5 pate in the program.

6 “(F) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

7 “(i) NONDUPLICATION.—In estab-
8 lishing the program under subparagraph
9 (B)(i), the Commission shall adopt regula-
10 tions to prevent duplicative Lifeline sub-
11 sidies from being awarded to an individual
12 eligible household. Only one Lifeline pro-
13 gram support amount per eligible house-
14 hold shall be available to qualifying individ-
15 uals.

16 “(ii) PREVENTING WASTE, FRAUD, OR
17 ABUSE.—In adopting rules to implement
18 this paragraph, the Commission shall con-
19 sider any appropriate measures to prevent
20 any waste, fraud, or abuse of this program.

21 “(iii) ELIGIBILITY.—The Commission,
22 in consultation with other relevant Federal
23 agencies, shall establish a national data-
24 base which can be used to determine con-

- 1 sumer eligibility for Lifeline program sub-
- 2 sidies.”.

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