

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4588

To improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2020

Mrs. SHAHEEN (for herself, Mr. KENNEDY, Ms. ERNST, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. RISCH, and Mr. MARKEY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship

A BILL

To improve certain programs of the Small Business Administration to better assist small business customers in accessing broadband technology, 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 “Small Business
5 Broadband and Emerging Information Technology En-
6 hancement Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECH-**
2 **NOLOGY COORDINATOR.**

3 The Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 631 et seq.) is
4 amended—

5 (1) by redesignating section 49 (15 U.S.C. 631
6 note) as section 50; and

7 (2) by inserting after section 48 (15 U.S.C.
8 657u) the following:

9 **“SEC. 49. BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION**
10 **TECHNOLOGY.**

11 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

12 “(1) the term ‘Associate Administrator’ means
13 the Associate Administrator for the Office of Invest-
14 ment and Innovation;

15 “(2) the term ‘broadband’ means—

16 “(A) high-speed wired broadband internet;
17 and

18 “(B) high-speed wireless internet;

19 “(3) the term ‘broadband and emerging infor-
20 mation technology coordinator’ means the employee
21 designated to carry out the broadband and emerging
22 information technology coordination responsibilities
23 of the Administration under subsection (b)(1); and

24 “(4) the term ‘emerging information tech-
25 nology’ includes—

1 “(A) data science technologies such as arti-
 2 ficial intelligence and machine learning;

3 “(B) Internet of Things;

4 “(C) distributed ledger technologies such
 5 as blockchain;

6 “(D) cloud computing and software as a
 7 system technologies;

8 “(E) computer numerical control tech-
 9 nologies such as 3D printing; and

10 “(F) robotics and automation.

11 “(b) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—

12 “(1) ASSIGNMENT OF COORDINATOR.—The As-
 13 sociate Administrator shall designate a senior em-
 14 ployee of the Office of Investment and Innovation to
 15 serve as the broadband and emerging information
 16 technology coordinator, who—

17 “(A) shall report to the Associate Adminis-
 18 trator;

19 “(B) shall work in coordination with—

20 “(i) the chief information officer, the
 21 chief technology officer, and the head of
 22 the Office of Technology of the Adminis-
 23 tration; and

24 “(ii) any other Associate Adminis-
 25 trator of the Administration determined

1 appropriate by the Associate Adminis-
2 trator;

3 “(C) has experience developing and imple-
4 menting telecommunications policy in the pri-
5 vate sector or government; and

6 “(D) has demonstrated significant experi-
7 ence in the area of broadband or emerging in-
8 formation technology.

9 “(2) RESPONSIBILITIES OF COORDINATOR.—
10 The broadband and emerging information technology
11 coordinator shall—

12 “(A) coordinate programs of the Adminis-
13 tration that assist small business concerns in
14 adopting, making innovations in, and using
15 broadband and other emerging information
16 technologies;

17 “(B) serve as the primary liaison of the
18 Administration to other Federal agencies in-
19 volved in broadband and emerging information
20 technology policy, including the Department of
21 Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, the
22 Department of the Treasury, and the Federal
23 Communications Commission;

24 “(C) identify best practices relating to
25 broadband and emerging information tech-

1 nology that may benefit small business con-
2 cerns; and

3 “(D) identify and catalog tools and train-
4 ing available through the resource partners of
5 the Administration that assist small business
6 concerns in adopting, making innovations in,
7 and using broadband and emerging information
8 technologies.

9 “(3) TRAVEL.—Not more than 20 percent of
10 the hours of service by the broadband and emerging
11 information technology coordinator during any fiscal
12 year shall consist of travel outside the United States
13 to perform official duties.

14 “(c) BROADBAND AND EMERGING INFORMATION
15 TECHNOLOGY TRAINING.—

16 “(1) TRAINING.—The Associate Administrator
17 shall provide to employees of the Administration
18 training that—

19 “(A) familiarizes employees of the Admin-
20 istration with broadband and other emerging
21 information technologies;

22 “(B) includes—

23 “(i) instruction on counseling small
24 business concerns regarding adopting,
25 making innovations in, and using

1 broadband and other emerging information
2 technologies; and

3 “(ii) information on programs of the
4 Federal Government that provide assist-
5 ance to small business concerns relating to
6 broadband and emerging information tech-
7 nologies; and

8 “(C) to maximum extent practicable, uses
9 the tools and training cataloged and identified
10 under subsection (b)(2)(D).

11 “(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

12 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
13 as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

14 “(d) REPORTS.—

15 “(1) BIENNIAL REPORT ON ACTIVITIES.—Not
16 later than 2 years after the date on which the Asso-
17 ciate Administrator makes the first designation of
18 an employee under subsection (b), and every 2 years
19 thereafter, the broadband and emerging information
20 technology coordinator shall submit to the Com-
21 mittee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of
22 the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of
23 the House of Representatives a report regarding the
24 programs and activities of the Administration relat-

ing to broadband and other emerging information technologies.

“(2) IMPACT OF BROADBAND AVAILABILITY, SPEED, AND PRICE AND EMERGING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT ON SMALL BUSINESSES.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to appropriations, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall conduct a study evaluating the impact of—

“(i) broadband availability, speed, and price on small business concerns; and

“(ii) emerging information technology deployment on small business concerns.

“(B) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of the Small Business Broadband and Emerging Information Technology Enhancement Act of 2020, the Chief Counsel for Advocacy shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on the results of the study under subparagraph (A), including—

1 “(i) a survey of broadband speeds
2 available to small business concerns;

3 “(ii) a survey of the cost of broadband
4 speeds available to small business con-
5 cerns;

6 “(iii) a survey of the type of
7 broadband technology used by small busi-
8 ness concerns;

9 “(iv) a survey of the types of emerg-
10 ing information technologies used by small
11 business concerns; and

12 “(v) any policy recommendations that
13 may improve the access of small business
14 concerns to comparable broadband services
15 or emerging information technologies at
16 comparable rates in all regions of the
17 United States.”.

18 **SEC. 3. ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

19 Section 21(c)(3)(B) of the Small Business Act (15
20 U.S.C. 648(c)(3)(B)) is amended—

21 (1) in the matter preceding clause (i), by insert-
22 ing “accessing broadband and other emerging infor-
23 mation technology,” after “technology transfer,”;

24 (2) in clause (ii), by striking “and” at the end;

1 (3) in clause (iii), by adding “and” at the end;
2 and
3 (4) by adding at the end the following:
4 “(iv) increasing the competitiveness and
5 productivity of small business concerns by as-
6 sisting entrepreneurs in accessing broadband
7 and other emerging information technology;”.

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