

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7948

To include reasonable costs for high-speed internet service in the utility allowances for families residing in public housing, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 11, 2024

Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Ms. DEAN of Pennsylvania, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. MCGOVERN, and Mrs. BEATTY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Financial Services

A BILL

To include reasonable costs for high-speed internet service in the utility allowances for families residing in public housing, 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 “Closing the Digital
5 Divide for Students Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. INCLUSION OF HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICE IN**
2 **PUBLIC HOUSING UTILITY ALLOWANCES FOR**
3 **CERTAIN FAMILIES.**

4 Subsection (b) of section 3 of the United States
5 Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437a(b)) is amended
6 by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

7 “(14) UTILITY ALLOWANCE.—A utility allowance
8 under this Act for public housing shall include costs for
9 high-speed internet service, including the cost of renting
10 or purchasing equipment necessary to access such service
11 and a one-time installation fee, subject to the following
12 limitations:

13 “(A) COST.—The cost included in a utility al-
14 lowance for a public housing dwelling unit pursuant
15 to this paragraph for monthly internet service shall
16 not—

17 “(i) exceed the lowest cost available in the
18 area of such housing for such monthly high-
19 speed internet service; and

20 “(ii) include any costs for cable or satellite
21 television service or telephone service.

22 “(B) FAMILY CHOICE.—Subparagraph (A) may
23 not be construed to prohibit a household in public
24 housing from subscribing to—

1 “(i) a high-speed internet service the cost
2 of which exceeds the cost described in subpara-
3 graph (A)(i); or

4 “(ii) any joint package for internet service
5 together with cable or satellite television service
6 or telephone service, or both.

7 “(C) QUALIFIED FAMILIES.—Costs for high-
8 speed internet service may be included in a utility al-
9 lowance only for a household that incurs such costs
10 and includes children who qualify for free and re-
11 duced price lunch pursuant to section 9 of the Rich-
12 ard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42
13 U.S.C. 1758).

14 “(D) PROTECTION OF MINORS.—Costs for high-
15 speed internet service may be included in a utility al-
16 lowance for a household only if the internet service
17 provider, upon initial provision of such service for a
18 household, provides the household with a specific
19 technology capable of blocking or filtering internet
20 access to visual depictions described in section
21 254(h)(5)(B)(i) of the Communications Act of 1934
22 (47 U.S.C. 254(h)(5)(B)(i)) that provides a level of
23 protection against access by minors to such depic-
24 tions through the internet that is at least as great
25 as the level of protection provided by a technology

1 protection measure (as such term is defined in para-
2 graph (7) of such section 254(h)) that meets the re-
3 quirements for certification under such paragraph,
4 as determined by the Secretary.”.

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