

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 317

Recognizing the importance of broadband in rural areas throughout the United States and the critical need to invest in broadband expansion in an increasingly remote and digitally dependent world.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 24, 2023

Mr. BAIRD (for himself and Mr. CUELLAR) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of broadband in rural areas throughout the United States and the critical need to invest in broadband expansion in an increasingly remote and digitally dependent world.

Whereas the COVID–19 pandemic and the resulting public health emergency declared by the Secretary of Health and Human Services in 2020 led to an increase in dependency on both remote and digital communication in schools, businesses, government agencies, healthcare facilities, and places of work, making access to reliable high-speed internet essential for many Americans, more than ever before;

Whereas technology is transforming the agriculture industry and changing the way farms operate, and such advances are largely dependent on maintaining strong internet connectivity in rural communities;

Whereas consistent internet connectivity is essential for farmers, and innovation on farms and in other rural settings is severely hampered if these locations lack access to robust broadband;

Whereas a gap currently persists among rural and urban communities with respect to delivering high-speed and reliable broadband to all Americans, despite the growth in, and increasing normality of, remote work and digital communication since 2020;

Whereas high-quality internet access is essential for Americans to work, learn, and communicate with one another and it is therefore important that broadband access in underserved communities be improved and maintained;

Whereas approximately 60 percent of broadband capacity is used by large companies that provide content streaming services, and rural broadband providers have difficulty in raising prices to cover the costs associated with this ever-growing demand;

Whereas the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy should establish a broadband research and development working group to address national research challenges and opportunities for improving broadband access and adoption across the United States; and

Whereas one of the most vital needs for our country is modern and durable infrastructure, which includes strong and robust broadband: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives finds
2 that—

3 (1) the Federal Communications Commission
4 should study the current and projected demands on
5 rural broadband networks associated with services
6 offered by large companies that provide content
7 streaming services;

8 (2) in order to expand rural broadband assist-
9 ance and to improve the administration and account-
10 ability of the broadband programs at the Depart-
11 ment of Agriculture, there should be codification of
12 programs such as the ReConnect Loan and Grant
13 Program; and

14 (3) access to broadband in the United States is
15 in critical need of improvement, particularly as it af-
16 fects Americans located in rural communities who
17 continue to struggle to stay connected in an increas-
18 ingly remote and digitally dependent world.

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