

106TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4473

To amend the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act to establish a program to distribute funds to State educational agencies to advance the use of technology to effectively teach our students computer skills and improve the general educational performance of students, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 16, 2000

Mr. WYNN (for himself and Mr. RUSH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce, and in addition to the Committees on Ways and Means, and Education and the Workforce, 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

A BILL

To amend the National Telecommunications and Information Administration Organization Act to establish a program to distribute funds to State educational agencies to advance the use of technology to effectively teach our students computer skills and improve the general educational performance of students, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Computers in Our
3 Community Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 The Congress finds the following:

6 (1) There is a growing gap, commonly referred
7 to as the digital divide, between individuals who have
8 access to computers and the Internet and individuals
9 who do not have such access.

10 (2) Households with incomes of \$75,000 or
11 greater are more than 20 times more likely to have
12 access to the Internet, and more than 9 times more
13 likely to have a computer at home, than households
14 with the lowest income levels.

15 (3) Although 58.9 percent of Americans earning
16 over \$75,000 annually frequently use the Internet,
17 only 16 percent of Americans earning between
18 \$5,000 and \$10,000 annually use the Internet.

19 (4) Black and Hispanic households are $\frac{2}{5}$ as
20 likely to have home Internet access as white house-
21 holds.

22 (5) The digital divide is an emergency that will
23 detrimentally affect the economy and society of the
24 Nation absent immediate corrective action.

25 (6) The e-rate program of the Federal Commu-
26 nications Commission ensures that schools and li-

1 libraries receive telecommunications services at a dis-
2 counted rate. Although tremendously successful, this
3 program is insufficient because there is twice the de-
4 mand for funding as there is funding available.

5 (7) According to statistics by the Department
6 of Education, there is a dire need for additional
7 computers in some schools. Schools with the highest
8 concentrations of poverty had an average of 16 stu-
9 dents per instructional computer with Internet ac-
10 cess, compared to 7 students for each such computer
11 in schools with the lowest concentrations of poverty.

12 (8) The computer industry is the fastest grow-
13 ing industry in our country. There is a documented
14 shortage of information technology workers. Increas-
15 ingly, workers in all fields of employment will need
16 to be computer literate. Ensuring that classrooms
17 have computers that are used effectively to teach
18 students will help meet this need.

19 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENT TO THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNI-**
20 **CATIONS AND INFORMATION ADMINISTRA-**
21 **TION ORGANIZATION ACT.**

22 The National Telecommunications and Information
23 Administration Organization Act (47 U.S.C. 901 et seq.)
24 is amended—

25 (1) by redesignating part C as part D; and

1 1965 for such fiscal year bears to the total amount
2 allocated to all such participating State educational
3 agencies under such title I for such fiscal year.

4 “(2) LOCAL ALLOCATIONS.—Each participating
5 State educational agency shall allocate to each par-
6 ticipating local educational agency an amount that
7 bears the same ratio to the amount allocated to such
8 State for a fiscal year as the total amount allocated
9 to such local educational agency under title I of the
10 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
11 for such fiscal year bears to the total amount allo-
12 cated to all such participating local educational
13 agencies in such State under such title I for such
14 fiscal year.

15 “(c) ELIGIBILITY.—

16 “(1) PARTICIPATING STATE EDUCATIONAL
17 AGENCIES.—In order to qualify as a participating
18 State educational agency for purposes of this sec-
19 tion, a State educational agency shall create or mod-
20 ify and submit to the Secretary a technology plan
21 that—

22 “(A) identifies the current ratio of stu-
23 dents to computers in each school district in the
24 State, and specifies the Internet connectivity of
25 the computer systems in such districts; and

1 “(B) complies with such other criteria as
2 the Secretary, in conjunction with the Secretary
3 of Education, shall prescribe to assure that the
4 funds provided under this section are being
5 used properly in schools to advance the use of
6 technology to effectively teach students com-
7 puter skills and improve the general educational
8 performance of students.

9 “(2) PARTICIPATING LOCAL EDUCATIONAL
10 AGENCIES.—In order to qualify as a participating
11 local educational agency for purposes of this section,
12 a local educational agency shall create or modify and
13 submit to the State educational agency a technology
14 plan that proves such local educational agency is
15 meeting the goals of the technology plan of the State
16 educational agency.

17 “(d) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds provided under this
18 section may be used for the following:

19 “(1) The purchase of computers that meet a
20 minimum standard as determined by the Secretary.

21 “(2) The electrical wiring that schools may re-
22 quire to connect computers to each other and to the
23 Internet.

24 “(3) Hiring technological assistants to ensure
25 that each school has access to a trained computer

1 professional to provide technology training for teach-
2 ers and perform maintenance of computer systems.
3 A maximum of 1 technological assistant per 5 ele-
4 mentary schools, 1 technological assistant per 3 mid-
5 dle schools, and 1 technological assistant per 2 high
6 schools may be paid for with such funds.

7 **“SEC. 133. DIGITAL DIVIDE WORKFORCE TRAINING INITIA-**
8 **TIVE.**

9 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—From 5 percent of the
10 amount made available under section 137 for any fiscal
11 year, the Secretary, acting through the Assistant Sec-
12 retary, shall carry out a program to award grants, on a
13 competitive basis, to nonprofit organizations for the estab-
14 lishment of job training programs for preparing individ-
15 uals for computer and technology related jobs.

16 “(b) CRITERIA.—The Secretary, after consultation
17 with the Secretary of Labor, shall establish the criteria
18 for administering the grants under this section, which
19 shall include the following:

20 “(1) Grants under this section shall be for 2
21 years.

22 “(2) Grant applicants shall serve low income in-
23 dividuals, as such term is defined in section 101 of
24 the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (29 U.S.C.
25 2801).

1 “(3) Grant applicants may submit an applica-
2 tion under this section only after consulting with the
3 appropriate local workforce investment board under
4 such Act, and obtaining a favorable recommendation
5 of the application by such board.

6 “(c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
7 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to applications
8 that—

9 “(1) are submitted by nonprofit organizations
10 that have experience in providing technological train-
11 ing;

12 “(2) propose job training programs that will
13 serve individuals most in need of computer and tech-
14 nology training, as determined by the Secretary; and

15 “(3) provide flexibility in training in order to
16 accommodate a greater number of individuals.

17 “(d) APPLICATION.—To seek a grant under this sec-
18 tion, an applicant shall submit an application to the Sec-
19 retary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
20 such information as the Secretary, in conjunction with the
21 Secretary of Labor, may reasonably prescribe. Each such
22 application shall provide a system for tracking the employ-
23 ment success of individuals who attend any proposed job
24 training program.

1 “(2) Eligible recipients of grants under this sec-
2 tion shall be community centers that receive Federal,
3 State, or local government funding, public libraries,
4 and nonprofit organizations working in conjunction
5 with such centers and libraries.

6 “(3) Each recipient of grant funds under this
7 section shall use such funds to establish a program
8 for providing greater access to, instruction on, and
9 assistance with computers and the Internet.

10 “(4) Grants under this section shall be for 3
11 years.

12 “(c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
13 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to applications that
14 demonstrate that the program for which funds are
15 sought—

16 “(1) will be able to sustain funding in the ab-
17 sence of Federal funding; and

18 “(2) will serve areas with a low rate of access
19 to computers and the Internet.

20 “(d) APPLICATION.—To seek a grant under this sec-
21 tion, an applicant shall submit an application to the Sec-
22 retary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
23 such information as the Secretary may reasonably pre-
24 scribe. Each such application shall include—

1 “(1) a description of the proposed program, in-
2 cluding how the program would will make technology
3 available to areas with a low rate of access to com-
4 puters and the Internet;

5 “(2) a demonstration of the need for computers
6 and access to the Internet in the area to be served;
7 and

8 “(3) a description of the type technology that
9 will be provided.

10 **“SEC. 135. COMPUTER CURRICULUM PARTNERSHIP.**

11 “(a) PROGRAM AUTHORITY.—From 5 percent of the
12 amount made available under section 137 for any fiscal
13 year, the Secretary, acting through the Assistant Sec-
14 retary, shall carry out a program to award grants, on a
15 competitive basis, to institutions of higher education that
16 create successful partnerships between their education and
17 computer departments to create software or Internet
18 applications—

19 “(1) to train teachers in using computers, and
20 using computers to teach students; or

21 “(2) to use in the classroom to teach students.

22 “(b) CRITERIA.—The Secretary, after consultation
23 with the Secretary of Education, shall establish the cri-
24 teria for administering the grants under this section. Such

1 criteria shall include priorities for awarding funds under
2 this section—

3 “(1) based on the need of the schools being
4 served and their educational priorities; and

5 “(2) giving preference to those applicants that
6 will operate their programs in conjunction with local
7 educational agencies.

8 “(c) CLEARINGHOUSE.—The Secretary shall, in con-
9 junction with the Secretary of Education, develop a clear-
10 inghouse to make available information derived from the
11 activities of recipients of funds under this section to other
12 schools throughout the United States.

13 “(d) APPLICATION.—To seek a grant under this sec-
14 tion, an applicant shall submit an application to the Sec-
15 retary at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by
16 such information as the Secretary, in conjunction with the
17 Secretary of Education, may reasonably prescribe. Each
18 application shall include a description of the format of the
19 software or Internet applications to be created.

20 **“SEC. 136. ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.**

21 “Of amounts available to carry out a program to
22 award grants under each of sections 133, 134, and 135,
23 the Secretary may not use more than 1 percent to pay
24 administration costs under that section.

1 **“SEC. 137. REGULATIONS.**

2 “The Secretary may prescribe such regulations as
3 may be necessary to carry out this part.

4 **“SEC. 138. APPROPRIATIONS AUTHORIZED.**

5 “There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
6 this part for any fiscal year an amount not to exceed the
7 amount deposited to the Computers in Our Communities
8 Trust Fund for such fiscal year pursuant to section 9511
9 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

10 **“SEC. 139. DEFINITIONS.**

11 “As used in this part—

12 “(1) the terms ‘State educational agency’ and
13 ‘local educational agency’ have the meanings pro-
14 vided such terms in section 14101 of the Elementary
15 and Secondary Education Act of 1965; and

16 “(2) the term ‘institution of higher education’
17 has the meaning provided such term in section 102
18 of the Higher Education Act of 1965.”.

19 **SEC. 4. COMPUTERS IN OUR COMMUNITIES TRUST FUND.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter A of chapter 98 of the
21 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by inserting
22 after section 9510 the following:

23 **“SEC. 9511. COMPUTERS IN OUR COMMUNITIES TRUST**
24 **FUND.**

25 “(a) CREATION OF TRUST FUND.—There is estab-
26 lished in the Treasury of the United States a trust fund

1 to be known as the ‘Computers in Our Communities Trust
2 Fund’, consisting of such amounts as may be appropriated
3 or credited pursuant to this section or section 9602(b).

4 “(b) TRANSFER TO COMPUTERS IN OUR COMMU-
5 NITIES TRUST FUND AMOUNTS EQUIVALENT TO CERTAIN
6 TAXES.—There are hereby appropriated to the Computers
7 in Our Communities Trust Fund amounts equivalent to
8 100 percent of the taxes received in the Treasury after
9 September 30, 2000, under section 4251 (relating to tax
10 on communications).

11 “(c) EXPENDITURES FROM COMPUTERS IN OUR
12 COMMUNITIES TRUST FUND.—Amounts in the Computers
13 in Our Communities Trust Fund shall be available for
14 making appropriations to carry out the provisions of part
15 C of the National Telecommunications and Information
16 Administration Organization Act.”.

17 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
18 for such subchapter A is amended by adding at the end
19 the following new item:

“Sec. 9511. Computers in Our Communities Trust Fund.”

20 **SEC. 5. REDUCTION OF EXCISE TAX ON TELEPHONE AND**
21 **OTHER COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4251(b)(2) of the Internal
23 Revenue Code of 1986 is amended to read as follows:

24 “(2) APPLICABLE PERCENTAGE.—The term
25 ‘applicable percentage’ means 1 percent.”

1 (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by
2 subsection (a) shall apply to amounts paid pursuant to
3 bills first rendered after September 30, 2000.

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