

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6534

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 17, 2020

Mr. FOSTER (for himself, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. SEWELL of Alabama, Mr. RUSH, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. NEGUSE, Mrs. LEE of Nevada, Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York, Ms. BONAMICI, Mrs. HAYES, Mr. HECK, Ms. DEAN, Mrs. AXNE, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mrs. BEATTY, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, and Mr. GREEN of Texas) 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 2020”.

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 allow-
8 ance under this Act for public housing shall include
9 costs for high-speed internet service, including the
10 cost of renting or purchasing equipment necessary to
11 access such service and a one-time installation fee,
12 subject to the following limitations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

7 “(C) QUALIFIED FAMILIES.—Costs for
8 high-speed internet service may be included in
9 a utility allowance only for a household that in-
10 curs such costs and includes children who qual-
11 ify for free and reduced price lunch pursuant to
12 section 9 of the Richard B. Russell National
13 School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758).

14 “(D) PROTECTION OF MINORS.—Costs for
15 high-speed internet service may be included in
16 a utility allowance for a household only if the
17 internet service provider, upon initial provision
18 of such service for a household, provides the
19 household with a specific technology capable of
20 blocking or filtering internet access to visual de-
21 pictions described in section 254(h)(5)(B)(i) of
22 the Communications Act of 1937 (47 U.S.C.
23 254(h)(5)(B)(i)) that provides a level of protec-
24 tion against access by minors to such depictions
25 through the internet that is at least as great as

1 the level of protection provided by a technology
2 protection measure (as such term is defined in
3 paragraph (7) of such section 254(h)) that
4 meets the requirements for certification under
5 such paragraph, as determined by the Sec-
6 retary.”.

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