

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1102

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program to make grants to States to inform Medicaid enrollees, SNAP participants, and low-income residents of potential eligibility for the Lifeline program of the Commission.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 13, 2021

Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program to make grants to States to inform Medicaid enrollees, SNAP participants, and low-income residents of potential eligibility for the Lifeline program of the Commission.

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 “Promoting Access to
5 Broadband Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. LIFELINE ENROLLMENT OUTREACH GRANTS.**

2 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

3 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
4 means the Federal Communications Commission.

5 (2) COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—The term “cov-
6 ered individuals” means—

7 (A) Medicaid enrollees;

8 (B) SNAP participants; and

9 (C) low-income residents.

10 (3) ELIGIBLE-BUT-NOT-ENROLLED.—The term
11 “eligible-but-not-enrolled” means, with respect to an
12 individual, that the individual is eligible for the Life-
13 line program but is not enrolled in the Lifeline pro-
14 gram.

15 (4) LIFELINE PROGRAM.—The term “Lifeline
16 program” means the Lifeline program of the Com-
17 mission.

18 (5) LOW-INCOME.—The term “low-income”
19 means a gross annual income at or below 135 per-
20 cent of the Federal poverty level.

21 (6) MEDICAID ENROLLEE.—The term “Med-
22 icaid enrollee” means, with respect to a State, an in-
23 dividual enrolled in the State plan under title XIX
24 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)
25 or a waiver of that plan.

1 (7) REACH.—The term “reach” means, with re-
2 spect to an individual, to inform the individual of po-
3 tential eligibility for the Lifeline program and to
4 provide the individual with information about the
5 Lifeline program, as described in subsection (e).

6 (8) SNAP PARTICIPANT.—The term “SNAP
7 participant” means an individual who is a member
8 of a household that participates in the supplemental
9 nutrition assistance program under the Food and
10 Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

11 (9) STATE.—The term “State” means each
12 State of the United States, the District of Columbia,
13 each commonwealth, territory, or possession of the
14 United States, and each federally recognized Indian
15 Tribe.

16 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Commission shall estab-
17 lish a competitive program to make grants to States to
18 inform covered individuals of potential eligibility for the
19 Lifeline program.

20 (c) APPLICATION.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may only
22 award a grant under this section to a State that
23 submits an application at such time, in such form,
24 and with such information and assurances as the
25 Commission may require.

1 (2) MATTERS REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED.—

2 An application submitted by a State under para-
3 graph (1) shall include—

4 (A) the number of covered individuals in
5 the State;

6 (B) a plan for the activities that the State
7 will conduct using grant funds, including a list
8 of each agency within the State that will assist
9 in carrying out those activities; and

10 (C) an estimate of the percentage of eligi-
11 ble-but-not-enrolled individuals in the State who
12 will be reached by those activities.

13 (d) SELECTION.—

14 (1) MINIMUM OF 5 STATES.—The Commission
15 shall award grants under this section to not fewer
16 than 5 States.

17 (2) FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION.—In award-
18 ing grants under this section, the Commission shall
19 give favorable consideration—

20 (A) to States that have higher numbers of
21 covered individuals; and

22 (B) to States proposing, in the plans sub-
23 mitted under subsection (c)(2)(B), to conduct
24 activities that have the potential to reach higher
25 percentages of eligible-but-not-enrolled individ-

1 uals in those States, as determined by the Com-
2 mission, taking into consideration the estimates
3 submitted under subsection (c)(2)(C).

4 (3) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY.—In awarding
5 grants under this section, the Commission shall, to
6 the maximum extent practicable, select States from
7 different geographic regions of the United States.

8 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—A State that receives a
10 grant under this section shall use grant funds, in ac-
11 cordance with the plan included in the application of
12 the State under subsection (c)(2)(B), to—

13 (A) inform covered individuals and organi-
14 zations or agencies that serve those individuals,
15 as the case may be under the terms of the
16 grant awarded to the State, of potential eligi-
17 bility for the Lifeline program;

18 (B) provide those covered individuals with
19 information about the Lifeline program, includ-
20 ing—

21 (i) how to apply for the Lifeline pro-
22 gram; and

23 (ii) a description of the prohibition on
24 more than 1 subscriber in each household

1 receiving a service provided under the Life-
2 line program; and

3 (C) partner with nonprofit and community-
4 based organizations to provide those covered in-
5 dividuals with assistance applying for the Life-
6 line program and information about product
7 and technology choices.

8 (2) MULTIPLE STATE AGENCIES.—A State that
9 receives a grant under this section may provide
10 grant funds to 1 or more agencies located within the
11 State to carry out the activities under the grant.

12 (f) OUTREACH TO STATES REGARDING GRANT PRO-
13 GRAM.—Before accepting applications for the grant pro-
14 gram established under this section, the Commission shall
15 conduct outreach to States to ensure that States are aware
16 of the grant program and how to apply for a grant under
17 the grant program.

18 (g) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after
20 establishing the grant program under this section,
21 the Commission shall submit to Congress a report
22 evaluating the effectiveness of the grant program.

23 (2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under
24 paragraph (1) shall include—

1 (A) the number of individuals notified of
2 Lifeline program eligibility by States receiving
3 grants under this section;

4 (B) the number of new applicants to the
5 Lifeline program from States receiving grants
6 under this section, including the number of
7 those applicants whose Lifeline program appli-
8 cations were approved and the number of those
9 applicants whose Lifeline program applications
10 were denied; and

11 (C) the cost-effectiveness of the grant pro-
12 gram established under this section.

13 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
14 authorized to be appropriated to the Commission such
15 sums as may be necessary to carry out this section for
16 the first 5 full fiscal years beginning after the establish-
17 ment of the grant program under this section.

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