

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1832

A RESOLUTION urging modifications to the National Broadband Plan
for the benefit of rural residents of Kansas.

WHEREAS, Residents of this state living in rural areas deserve and expect the same high-quality, affordable communications services that are available to their urban neighbors; and

WHEREAS, Similar to businesses in urban areas, rural businesses, farmers and ranchers compete in the global marketplace and depend on affordable access to robust broadband services to market and sell their products around the world; and

WHEREAS, Children living in rural areas should have the same educational opportunities as their urban counterparts, and high-speed internet access is absolutely necessary to allow these students opportunities for advanced learning through distance education; and

WHEREAS, Residents living in rural areas face unique health care challenges because of the distances that must be traveled to seek basic and advanced medical care, and telemedicine delivered via broadband networks can improve the health of rural residents by reducing the time and travel needed for high-quality health care; and

WHEREAS, Many rural areas encounter significant challenges in pursuing and sustaining economic development plans that bring quality, higher-paying jobs to their communities, and insufficiently robust broadband speeds will further hamper the economic development needs of many rural communities; and

WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture has rightfully placed significant importance on the need for broadband access in rural America to improve quality-of-life and economic development; and

WHEREAS, Communications providers that serve this state's rural areas have worked diligently to ensure that their consumers have access to affordable and reliable broadband services and have utilized the United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service loan and grant programs for economic development; and

WHEREAS, Contrary to the progress rural communications providers have had in deploying broadband, the Federal Communications Commission is embarking on a National Broadband Plan that will negatively impact the ability of residents living in rural areas of this state to realize the true benefits of access to robust broadband speeds by limiting support to four megabits per second in rural, high-cost areas of the country, while calling for one hundred million urban homes to have access to broadband speeds at 100 megabits per second by 2020; and

WHEREAS, The National Broadband Plan runs counter to the federal universal service policy which ensures access to communications services at comparable rates regardless of the consumer's location: Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we challenge the Federal Communications Commission to make substantive change to the National Broadband Plan so that the plan develops a universal service support mechanism that ensures accountability, promotes stability, provides efficient and effective incentives for broadband network deployment and operation and encourages broadband adoption by keeping broadband service affordable. The plan should also ensure high-quality service by linking funding to satisfying reasonable, but meaningful, carrier of last resort obligations. Consistent with the universal service principles in federal law, the plan should ensure that rural and urban consumers pay reasonably comparable rates for reasonably comparable services by providing adequate support in high-cost areas; and

Be it further resolved: That we urge the members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation to work with the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that commissioners understand the importance of robust broadband deployment to rural Kansas and how the current draft of the National Broadband Plan needs to be dramatically altered to ensure quality broadband service availability throughout this state; and

Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the commissioners of the Federal Communications Commission, the members of the Kansas Congressional Delegation and the Governor.

Senate Resolution No.1832 was sponsored by Senators Taddiken, Abrams, Apple, Bruce, Brungardt, Emler, Francisco, Haley, Hensley, Holland, Kelly, Kelsey, King, Kultala, Longbine, Love, Marshall, Masterson, McGinn, Merrick, Morris, Olson, Ostmeyer, Petersen, Pilcher-Cook, A. Schmidt, V. Schmidt, Schodorf, Steineger, Teichman and Umbarger.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

President of the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate.