



RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ROBUST BROADBAND INTERNET AWARENESS, ADOPTION, AND USE PROGRAMS

WHEREAS, the National Lieutenant Governors Association believes that widespread efforts to promote broadband adoption, use, and digital literacy are critical to improving the nation’s long-term competitiveness in a global market, and to achieving certain socioeconomic improvements in the quality of American life; and

WHEREAS, by expanding broadband adoption and digital literacy, a greater number of Americans may fully take advantage of the benefits of broadband based applications such as tele-health, energy management and education opportunities online; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2010 Federal Communications Commission (FCC) National Broadband Plan only 65 percent of U.S. households subscribe to broadband at home ^[1]; and

WHEREAS, more than one-third of all Americans do not have broadband at home ^[2]; and

WHEREAS, Americans that do not have broadband at home are disproportionately lower-income households, racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, seniors, rural residents and people with disabilities; half of all Hispanics do not use broadband at home, while 41% of African Americans do not; only 24% of Americans with less than a high school diploma use broadband at home, and the adoption rate for those with annual household incomes less than \$20,000 is only 40% ^[3]; and

WHEREAS, research shows that 36% of non-adopters cite cost of service and equipment as one of the main reasons certain populations do not seek out broadband services ^[4]; and

WHEREAS, research shows that about 22% of non-adopters cite a digital literacy-related factor as their main barrier ^[5]; and

WHEREAS, research also shows that a “lack of relevance” in broadband is one of the main reasons certain populations do not seek out broadband services ^[6]; and

WHEREAS, while cost is the leading barrier to adoption, in addition to cost, lack of digital skills, irrelevance of online content and inaccessible hardware and software often work together to limit adoption; and

WHEREAS, there are a number of broadband adoption initiatives, and

WHEREAS, The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act), in addition to funding broadband deployment, marked the first large-scale federal broadband adoption effort, and

WHEREAS, While the federal government has provided important financing for Internet adoption efforts, state and local governments are often in the best position to identify barriers and circumstances unique to their communities; and

WHEREAS, a number of public-private partnerships have been designed to close the digital divide in communities across the country; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 Comcast developed and launched Internet Essentials, a program designed to expand broadband adoption among low-income American households with at least one child eligible for free or reduced price school lunches, offering Internet service for \$9.95/month plus tax, the option to purchase a computer for \$149.99 plus tax and access to free digital literacy training online, in print and in person; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 a partnership with the FCC, participating National Cable & Telecommunications Association (NCTA) member cable companies, national non-profits and others will launch Connect 2 Compete, offer \$9.95 per month high-speed Internet for free school lunch families, \$150 laptop or desktop computer for free school lunch families and free digital literacy training online; and

WHEREAS, creating the conditions necessary to promote broadband adoption and increase utilization requires a multi-stakeholder initiative from the Federal, State and Local government, non-profits and philanthropic organizations and the private industry,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) maintains its commitment to bridge the digital divide expressed in 2009, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NLGA concurs that digital literacy and the adoption and use of available broadband are required elements to bridge the digital divide, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NLGA recommends that the state government promote adoption through general outreach and education and specific policies directed toward people who are not connected to the Internet for financial, socioeconomic or lack of relevancy reasons, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NLGA calls upon all levels of governments to work cooperatively with the private sector, nonprofits, and academia to develop robust broadband awareness, adoption, and use programs, and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution be forwarded to members of the Federal Communications Commission, the Administration, and the relevant federal agencies that can help to implement broadband adoption programs including but not limited to the United States Department of Education, Department of Commerce and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Submitted this 22nd day of June, 2012

Sponsors: Lt. Governor Tim Murray, Massachusetts

Lt. Governor Bill Bolling, Virginia

Cosponsors: Secretary of State Kenneth McClintock