

By: Senators Elliott, L. Chesterfield, S. Harrelson, G. Jeffress, J. Jeffress, D. Johnson

SENATE RESOLUTION

TO ENCOURAGE THE SENATE OF THE 88TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT THE COLLABORATION OF STATE AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO DEVELOP A LONG-RANGE PLAN TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL NEED FOR IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY TO BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY, BROADBAND CAPACITY, AND RELATED INTERNET TECHNOLOGY FOR ARKANSAS'S COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

Subtitle

TO ENCOURAGE THE SENATE TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LONG-RANGE PLAN TO ADDRESS THE CRITICAL NEED FOR IMPROVED ACCESSIBILITY TO BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY AND CAPACITY FOR ARKANSAS'S COMMUNITIES AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

WHEREAS, in recent years, the state has worked to increase Internet access serving the medical community and institutions of higher education; and

WHEREAS, the promise of that improved accessibility to broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and related Internet technology has not reached many rural communities and public school districts whose economic and educational needs remain underserved; and

WHEREAS, research studies have shown that improved accessibility to broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and related Internet technology benefits rural economic development through increased market access, higher salaries and employment opportunities, and educational improvements; and



WHEREAS, research has also shown that improved accessibility to broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and related Internet technology improves the overall quality of life through more efficient delivery of government services, improved health care, and instant access to information locally, nationally, and globally; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education will implement Common Core assessments in Arkansas public schools beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, which will be conducted electronically and therefore require increased accessibility to broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and related Internet technology for Arkansas public schools; and

WHEREAS, public school students will further benefit from the improved delivery of twenty-first century educational services using broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and Internet technology; and

WHEREAS, a long-range plan should be developed in collaboration with the private sector to provide improved accessibility to broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and related Internet technology to improve economic development, education, and quality of life for all Arkansans,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 88TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

That the Senate support the collaboration of state and private sectors to:

- (1) Identify the needs and priorities of Arkansas communities and public school districts for improved accessibility to broadband connectivity, broadband capacity, and related Internet technology; and
- (2) Develop a long-range plan for addressing those needs by October 1, 2012.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate encourage the completion of a long-range plan and the presentation of a report on that plan to the Legislative Council and Joint Budget Committee for their consideration in the budget hearings for the 2013 regular session of the 89th General Assembly.

