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(Original Signature of Member)

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R.

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to establish a Lifeline Assistance Program for universal broadband adoption, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. MATSUI introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Communications Act of 1934 to establish a Lifeline Assistance Program for universal broadband adoption, 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 “Broadband Afford-
5 ability Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. BROADBAND LIFELINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

7 Section 254(j) of the Communications Act of 1934
8 (47 U.S.C. 254(j)) is amended—

1 (1) by striking “(j) LIFELINE ASSISTANCE.—
2 Nothing in this” and inserting the following:

3 “(j) LIFELINE ASSISTANCE.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this”; and

5 (2) by adding at the end the following:

6 “(2) BROADBAND LIFELINE ASSISTANCE PRO-
7 GRAM.—

8 “(A) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this para-
9 graph is to promote the adoption of broadband
10 service by all people of the United States while
11 recognizing that the price of broadband service
12 is one of the barriers to adoption for low in-
13 come households.

14 “(B) ESTABLISHMENT.—

15 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than
16 270 days after the date of enactment of
17 the Broadband Affordability Act of 2011,
18 the Commission shall take all actions nec-
19 essary to establish a broadband lifeline
20 program that enables qualifying low-in-
21 come customers residing in urban and
22 rural areas to purchase broadband service
23 at reduced charges by reimbursing pro-
24 viders for each such customer served.

1 “(ii) MODEL.—Such broadband life-
2 line program shall be similar in structure
3 to the Lifeline program for basic telephone
4 service under subpart E of part 54 of title
5 47, Code of Federal Regulations.

6 “(iii) NONDUPLICATION.—In estab-
7 lishing the program under clause (i), the
8 Commission shall adopt regulations to pre-
9 vent duplicative broadband lifeline sub-
10 sidies being awarded for an individual eli-
11 gible household.

12 “(C) STATE MATCHING FUNDS.—In rec-
13 ognition of the interstate nature of broadband
14 service, the Commission may determine, in con-
15 sultation with the Federal-State Joint Board,
16 whether State matching funds must be provided
17 as a condition of eligibility for low-income
18 households within such State.

19 “(D) AMOUNT OF SUPPORT.—

20 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Commission,
21 in calculating the amount of support to be
22 provided to each low-income household,
23 shall routinely study the prevailing market
24 price for broadband service and the pre-

1 vailing speed of broadband service adopted
2 by households.

3 “(ii) INFORMATION.—To fulfill the re-
4 quirement under clause (i), the Commis-
5 sion shall rely on information that it rou-
6 tinely collects or that is publicly available.

7 “(E) TECHNOLOGY NEUTRAL.—

8 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Commission
9 shall ensure that the broadband lifeline
10 program is neutral as to the types of tech-
11 nology used to provide broadband service
12 to promote competition from broadband
13 service providers to qualify under such pro-
14 gram.

15 “(ii) AUTHORIZATION.—A broadband
16 service provider need not be an eligible
17 telecommunications carrier to receive sup-
18 port under the broadband lifeline program,
19 but such provider shall obtain authoriza-
20 tion from the Commission in order to par-
21 ticipate in the program.”.