

**CITY OF BALTIMORE  
COUNCIL BILL 23-193R  
(Resolution)**

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Introduced by: Councilmembers Cohen and McCray  
Introduced and adopted: October 2, 2023

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**A COUNCIL RESOLUTION CONCERNING**

**Request for Federal Action – Permanent Broadband Subsidy  
to Support Low-Income Communities**

FOR the purpose of calling upon President Joseph Biden and the United States Congress to create a Congressionally-funded broadband subsidy, as well as broadband adoption and learning solution, as a permanent component of the federal benefits available to those experiencing digital inequity.

**Recitals**

**WHEREAS**, because of the vital nature of broadband in today’s society, the African American Mayors Association urged Congress in its resolution, “Bridge the Digital Divide-19 by Implementing an Emergency Broadband Benefit”, to include an emergency broadband benefit for low-income Americans, and called for a permanent broadband internet subsidy for low-income Americans funded through federal appropriations.

**WHEREAS**, the Baltimore Digital Equity Coalition was founded to close the digital divide in 2020 during the Covid-19 Pandemic and called for the creation of the Baltimore City Office of Broadband and Digital Equity.

**WHEREAS**, the federal Consolidated appropriations Act of 2021 established an Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (“EBB”), enacted on May 12, 2021, that served as a temporary subsidy on monthly broadband services for qualifying low-income households to ensure they could afford broadband connections needed for work, school, healthcare, and other uses.

**WHEREAS**, Congress modified and extended the EBB Program and renamed it the Affordable Connectivity Program (“ACP”) within the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to make broadband service and connected devices available to low-income households at affordable, discounted prices from providers that opt to participate in the program.

**WHEREAS**, the Baltimore City Office of Broadband and Digital Equity has established the BMore Connected Campaign in partnership with EducationSuperHighway and Wide Angle Youth Media with the support of Comcast to promote the ACP.

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.  
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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1       **WHEREAS**, the ACP benefit provides a subsidy of up to \$30 per month toward internet  
2 service for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for households on qualifying Tribal  
3 lands, and eligible households can also receive a one-time subsidy of up to \$100 to purchase a  
4 laptop, desktop computer, or tablet from participating providers, if they contribute more than \$10  
5 and less than \$50 toward the purchase price.

6       **WHEREAS**, qualifying households for the ACP benefit are at or below 200% of the Federal  
7 Poverty Guidelines, or include a member of the household that meets at least 1 of the following  
8 criteria: received a Federal Pell Grant during the current award year; meets the eligibility criteria  
9 for a participating provider’s existing low-income internet program; participates in identified  
10 assistance programs (i.e., SNAP, Medicaid, Federal Public Housing Assistance, Supplemental  
11 Security Income, WIC, Veterans Pension or Survivor Benefits, or Lifeline); or participates in a  
12 qualifying assistance program and lives on Qualifying Tribal Land (i.e., Bureau of Indian Affairs  
13 General Assistance, Tribal TANF, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations, and  
14 income based Tribal Head Start).

15       **WHEREAS**, Congress approved \$14 billion for this program which became effective on  
16 March 16, 2022, and as of January 4, 2023, over 14.6 million households have signed up to-date.

17       **WHEREAS**, the Federal Communications Commission (“FCC”) adopted final rules for this  
18 long-term program, and it has been projected that the ACP will run out of funds in 2024, which  
19 would be highly disruptive to the over 14 million households receiving ACP-supported  
20 broadband service and could cause those households to lose broadband service.

21       **WHEREAS**, the FCC has recently moved to enhance broadband benefit awareness and  
22 enrollment, especially through efforts that support trusted messengers like digital navigators,  
23 community-based organizations, and government partners..

24       **WHEREAS**, broadband is critical for low-income communities to live, work, and play in the  
25 digital economy and it is imperative that these communities continue to have access to  
26 broadband.

27       **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE**, that the City  
28 Council calls upon President Joseph Biden and the United States Congress to create a  
29 Congressionally-funded broadband subsidy, as well as broadband adoption and learning solution,  
30 as a permanent component of the federal benefits available to those experiencing digital inequity.

31       **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the President of the  
32 United States, the Vice President of the United States, the Maryland Congressional Delegation to  
33 the United States Congress, the Chair and Commissioners of the Federal Communications  
34 Commission, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.