

117TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program to make grants to States to inform Medicaid enrollees, SNAP participants, and low-income residents of potential eligibility for the Lifeline program of the Commission.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MARKEY, Mrs. MURRAY, and Ms. KLOBUCHAR) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

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**A BILL**

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish a program to make grants to States to inform Medicaid enrollees, SNAP participants, and low-income residents of potential eligibility for the Lifeline program of the Commission.

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 “Promoting Access to  
5 Broadband Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. LIFELINE ENROLLMENT OUTREACH GRANTS.**

2 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

3 (1) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”  
4 means the Federal Communications Commission.

5 (2) COVERED INDIVIDUALS.—The term “cov-  
6 ered individuals” means—

7 (A) Medicaid enrollees;

8 (B) SNAP participants; and

9 (C) low-income residents.

10 (3) ELIGIBLE-BUT-NOT-ENROLLED.—The term  
11 “eligible-but-not-enrolled” means, with respect to an  
12 individual, that the individual is eligible for the Life-  
13 line program but is not enrolled in the Lifeline pro-  
14 gram.

15 (4) LIFELINE PROGRAM.—The term “Lifeline  
16 program” means the Lifeline program of the Com-  
17 mission.

18 (5) LOW-INCOME.—The term “low-income”  
19 means a gross annual income at or below 135 per-  
20 cent of the Federal poverty level.

21 (6) MEDICAID ENROLLEE.—The term “Med-  
22 icaid enrollee” means, with respect to a State, an in-  
23 dividual enrolled in the State plan under title XIX  
24 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.)  
25 or a waiver of that plan.

1           (7) REACH.—The term “reach” means, with re-  
2           spect to an individual, to inform the individual of po-  
3           tential eligibility for the Lifeline program and to  
4           provide the individual with information about the  
5           Lifeline program, as described in subsection (e).

6           (8) SNAP PARTICIPANT.—The term “SNAP  
7           participant” means an individual who is a member  
8           of a household that participates in the supplemental  
9           nutrition assistance program under the Food and  
10          Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.).

11          (9) STATE.—The term “State” means each  
12          State of the United States, the District of Columbia,  
13          each commonwealth, territory, or possession of the  
14          United States, and each federally recognized Indian  
15          Tribe.

16          (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Commission shall estab-  
17          lish a competitive program to make grants to States to  
18          inform covered individuals of potential eligibility for the  
19          Lifeline program.

20          (c) APPLICATION.—

21               (1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission may only  
22               award a grant under this section to a State that  
23               submits an application at such time, in such form,  
24               and with such information and assurances as the  
25               Commission may require.

1           (2) MATTERS REQUIRED TO BE INCLUDED.—

2           An application submitted by a State under para-  
3           graph (1) shall include—

4                   (A) the number of covered individuals in  
5           the State;

6                   (B) a plan for the activities that the State  
7           will conduct using grant funds, including a list  
8           of each agency within the State that will assist  
9           in carrying out those activities; and

10                   (C) an estimate of the percentage of eligi-  
11           ble-but-not-enrolled individuals in the State who  
12           will be reached by those activities.

13           (d) SELECTION.—

14                   (1) MINIMUM OF 5 STATES.—The Commission  
15           shall award grants under this section to not fewer  
16           than 5 States.

17                   (2) FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION.—In award-  
18           ing grants under this section, the Commission shall  
19           give favorable consideration—

20                   (A) to States that have higher numbers of  
21           covered individuals; and

22                   (B) to States proposing, in the plans sub-  
23           mitted under subsection (c)(2)(B), to conduct  
24           activities that have the potential to reach higher  
25           percentages of eligible-but-not-enrolled individ-



1 receiving a service provided under the Life-  
2 line program; and

3 (C) partner with nonprofit and community-  
4 based organizations to provide those covered in-  
5 dividuals with assistance applying for the Life-  
6 line program and information about product  
7 and technology choices.

8 (2) MULTIPLE STATE AGENCIES.—A State that  
9 receives a grant under this section may provide  
10 grant funds to 1 or more agencies located within the  
11 State to carry out the activities under the grant.

12 (f) OUTREACH TO STATES REGARDING GRANT PRO-  
13 GRAM.—Before accepting applications for the grant pro-  
14 gram established under this section, the Commission shall  
15 conduct outreach to States to ensure that States are aware  
16 of the grant program and how to apply for a grant under  
17 the grant program.

18 (g) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after  
20 establishing the grant program under this section,  
21 the Commission shall submit to Congress a report  
22 evaluating the effectiveness of the grant program.

23 (2) CONTENTS.—The report submitted under  
24 paragraph (1) shall include—

1           (A) the number of individuals notified of  
2           Lifeline program eligibility by States receiving  
3           grants under this section;

4           (B) the number of new applicants to the  
5           Lifeline program from States receiving grants  
6           under this section, including the number of  
7           those applicants whose Lifeline program appli-  
8           cations were approved and the number of those  
9           applicants whose Lifeline program applications  
10          were denied; and

11          (C) the cost-effectiveness of the grant pro-  
12          gram established under this section.

13          (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
14          authorized to be appropriated to the Commission such  
15          sums as may be necessary to carry out this section for  
16          the first 5 full fiscal years beginning after the establish-  
17          ment of the grant program under this section.