

House Resolution No. 6020

By Representatives Kuether, Alford, Hineman, C. Holmes, Knox and Swanson

3-29

1 A RESOLUTION urging modifications to the National Broadband Plan
2 for the benefit of rural residents of Kansas.

3 *WHEREAS, Residents of this state living in rural areas deserve*
4 *and expect the same high-quality, affordable communications services*
5 *that are available to their urban neighbors; and*

6 *WHEREAS, Similar to businesses in urban areas, rural*
7 *businesses, farmers and ranchers compete in the global marketplace and*
8 *depend on affordable access to robust broadband services to market and*
9 *sell their products around the world; and*

10 *WHEREAS, Children living in rural areas should have the same*
11 *educational opportunities as their urban counterparts, and high-speed*
12 *internet access is absolutely necessary to allow these students*

13 *opportunities for advanced learning through distance education; and*
14 *WHEREAS, Residents living in rural areas face unique health*
15 *care challenges because of the distances that must be traveled to seek*
16 *basic and advanced medical care, and telemedicine delivered via*
17 *broadband networks can improve the health of rural residents by*
18 *reducing the time and travel needed for high-quality health care; and*

19 *WHEREAS, Many rural areas encounter significant challenges in*
20 *pursuing and sustaining economic development plans that bring quality,*
21 *higher-paying jobs to their communities, and insufficiently robust*
22 *broadband speeds will further hamper the economic development needs*
23 *of many rural communities; and*

24 *WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture has*
25 *rightfully placed significant importance on the need for broadband*
26 *access in rural America to improve quality-of-life and economic*
27 *development; and*

28 *WHEREAS, Communications providers that serve this state's rural*
29 *areas have worked diligently to ensure that their consumers have access*
30 *to affordable and reliable broadband services and have utilized the*
31 *United States Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service loan*
32 *and grant programs for economic development; and*

33 *WHEREAS, Contrary to the progress rural communications*
34 *providers have had in deploying broadband, the Federal*
35 *Communications Commission is embarking on a National Broadband*
36 *Plan that will negatively impact the ability of residents living in rural*

1 *areas of this state to realize the true benefits of access to robust*
2 *broadband speeds by limiting support to four megabits per second in*
3 *rural, high-cost areas of the country, while calling for one hundred*
4 *million urban homes to have access to broadband speeds at 100 megabits*
5 *per second by 2020; and*

6 *WHEREAS, The National Broadband Plan runs counter to the*
7 *federal universal service policy which ensures access to communications*
8 *services at comparable rates regardless of the consumer's location: Now,*
9 *therefore,*

10 *Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas: That we*
11 *challenge the Federal Communications Commission to make substantive*
12 *change to the National Broadband Plan so that the plan develops a*
13 *universal service support mechanism that ensures accountability,*
14 *promotes stability, provides efficient and effective incentives for*
15 *broadband network deployment and operation and encourages*
16 *broadband adoption by keeping broadband service affordable. The plan*
17 *should also ensure high-quality service by linking funding to satisfying*
18 *reasonable, but meaningful, carrier of last resort obligations. Consistent*
19 *with the universal service principles in federal law, the plan should*
20 *ensure that rural and urban consumers pay reasonably comparable rates*
21 *for reasonably comparable services by providing adequate support in*
22 *high-cost areas; and*

23 *Be it further resolved: That we urge the members of the Kansas*
24 *Congressional Delegation to work with the Federal Communications*
25 *Commission to ensure that commissioners understand the importance of*
26 *robust broadband deployment to rural Kansas and how the current draft*
27 *of the National Broadband Plan needs to be dramatically altered to ensure*
28 *quality broadband service availability throughout this state; and*

29 *Be it further resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed*
30 *to provide an enrolled copy of this resolution to the commissioners of the*
31 *Federal Communications Commission, the members of the Kansas*
32 *Congressional Delegation and the Governor.*

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