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Title: The Digital Connectivity Act - For the purpose of expressing support for the Maryland Digital Connectivity Act.

Sponsors: Gavin Buckley, Rhonda Pindell Charles, Brooks Schandelmeier, Elly Tierney, Sheila Finlayson, Dajuan K. Gay, Fred Paone

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3/22/2021	1	City Council	adopt on first reader	Pass
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The Digital Connectivity Act - For the purpose of expressing support for the Maryland Digital Connectivity Act.

**CITY COUNCIL OF THE
City of Annapolis**

Resolution 8-21

**Introduced by: Mayor Buckley, Alderwoman Pindell Charles
Co-sponsored by: Alderman Schandelmeier, Alderwoman Tierney,
Alderwoman Finlayson**

A RESOLUTION concerning

The Digital Connectivity Act

FOR the purpose of expressing support for the Maryland Digital Connectivity Act.

WHEREAS, HB97 the “Digital Connectivity Act”, sponsored by Delegates Lierman, Attar, Bridges, Henson, D Jones, Rosenberg and Smith - cross-filed with SB66 sponsored by Senators Elfreth, Beidle, Edkardt, Griffith, Guzzone, Hester, Kelley, Patterson, Rosapepe, West and Zucker, establishes the Office of Digital Inclusion (ODI) within the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) as the successor to the Office of Rural Broadband (ORB), with expanded responsibilities and has an effective date of July 1, 2021; and

WHEREAS, in accord with the General Assembly, the Annapolis City Council recognizes “the importance of the Internet as the most transformative technology of modern life, a key stimulus for socioeconomic opportunity and development, and a prerequisite for social and economic inclusion; and

WHEREAS, high-quality broadband Internet service creates new jobs, attracts new industries, expands markets for new and existing businesses, enables Marylanders to better access educational opportunities and resources, facilitates delivery of health care services, and protects public safety; and

WHEREAS, increased deployment of broadband Internet services and infrastructure will improve long-term quality of life for all Marylanders and will ensure that the State remains economically competitive both locally and globally; and

WHEREAS, Maryland is committed to enabling the development of a statewide digital communications infrastructure through public investment, public-private partnerships, and cooperatives to meet the growing demand for reliable, high-speed, universal, and affordable broadband access in the key sectors of public safety, education, health care, and transportation for all Marylanders; and

WHEREAS, by advancing digital literacy and universal access among Marylanders, the State will help eradicate the inequalities in adoption, knowledge, and skills needed to effectively use and communicate through various digital platforms and tools, ultimately enabling the skills and knowledge necessary for digitally inclusive communities; and

WHEREAS, a growing digital divide between Marylanders who have the ability and means to use broadband Internet services and those who do not exacerbates preexisting inequality in the State; and

WHEREAS, The Governor established the Office of Rural Broadband in 2017 through Executive Order, and the Office is doing important work to provide Internet access and connectivity to certain residents in more rural parts of the State; and

WHEREAS, there are Marylanders in every county of the State who are unable to adequately use broadband Internet today, or who are unaware of the utility and benefits of broadband Internet; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary to establish an office that will work not only with rural jurisdictions but with every county in the State”; and

WHEREAS, the Annapolis City Council expresses its full support of HB97 and SB66 and encourages the General Assembly of Maryland to adopt these Bills and establish the Office of Digital Inclusion in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to ensure that every resident of the State is supported by high-quality broadband Internet service at an affordable price, and has the tools necessary to use and take advantage of the Internet.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that the General Assembly of Maryland has the full support of the Annapolis City Council in adopting HB97 and SB66 to establish the Office of Digital Inclusion in the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to ensure that every resident

of the State is supported by high-quality broadband Internet service at an affordable price, and has the tools necessary to use and take advantage of the Internet.

AND, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that the City Clerk shall send a copy of this Resolution to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Delegates, and the Maryland Municipal League.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE ANNAPOLIS CITY COUNCIL that this resolution shall take effect from the date of its passage.

EXPLANATION

Underlining indicates matter added.
[~~Strikethrough~~] indicates matter stricken.