



**NOBEL Women Resolution to Bridge the Digital Divide during COVID-19 by  
Implementing an Emergency Broadband Benefit**

**COMMITTEE: Telecommunications**

**RESOLUTION: TEL-20-03**

1. **WHEREAS**, access to affordable, reliable broadband internet is critical for residents of
2. urban and rural areas throughout the United States; and
3. **WHEREAS**, in 2019 it has been reported by PEW Research Center that 90% of
4. Americans use the internet; and
5. **WHEREAS**, the proportion of American adults with high-speed broadband service at
6. home increased rapidly and as of June 2019, 95% of the US population has access to
7. fixed broadband with speeds of at least 25/3 Mbps and 91% has access to speeds of at
8. least 100/10 Mbps; and
9. **WHEREAS**, broadband is critical for educating youth, providing telehealth, accessing
10. jobs, and connecting with each other in the 21st century, and COVID-19 has increased
11. the importance of internet connectivity; and
12. **WHEREAS**, despite the availability of broadband a digital divide still remains, with
13. data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), the FCC, and
14. Pew showing that only about 73% of U.S. households subscribe to a fixed broadband
15. connection, thereby leaving them without home broadband access during the pandemic,
16. where the need is critical; and
17. **WHEREAS**, due to the pandemic many schools are struggling to offer virtual distance
18. learning to youth in low income urban and rural communities because economic
19. hardships compounded by the pandemic has made broadband unaffordable for some
20. families and individuals; and
21. **WHEREAS**, some rural communities lack any access to high speed broadband due to the

22. high cost of broadband deployment in certain areas, among many other factors; and

23. **WHEREAS**, broadband deployment and adoption are two distinct issues; and

24. **WHEREAS**, broadband deployment is primarily a rural challenge and the Federal

25. Communications Commission (FCC) and Congress are taking, and are expected to take,

26. some important steps to address this deployment issue by helping to fund the deployment

27. to unserved areas and to remove regulatory and market-based impediments to

28. deployment in rural areas; and

29. **WHEREAS**, it is important for there to be a focus on how to further improve broadband

30. adoption; particularly in low income communities; and

31. **WHEREAS**, cost as a barrier is not unique to broadband, and the government has a track

32. record of supporting low income Americans, examples include food, housing, and

33. education; and

34. **WHEREAS**, with the onset of COVID-19, the urgency has increased for the government

35. to step up and help make broadband more affordable for low-income families; and

36. **WHEREAS**, the FCC and other federal agencies have used funding from the CARES

37. Act and other recently enacted coronavirus relief bills to help support broadband

38. affordability and deployment; and

39. **WHEREAS**, the cooperation of national, state and local government with the private

40. sector to facilitate investment in broadband infrastructure and adoption will positively

41. impact the longevity of communities; including but not limited to youth staying in and

42. returning to the community, improving opportunities for local businesses, expanding the

43. market potential to attract new businesses, expanding educational opportunities,

44. expanding telehealth options and innovation, improving real estate values, expanding and

45. elevating civic participation, expanding resources for elderly populations to age in place,

46. expanding public safety applications and other municipal

47. services and innovation and improving overall quality of life for residents.

48. **BE IT RESOLVED** The National Organization of Black Elected Legislative Women

49. (NOBEL Women) urges the United States Congress and the President to include an

50. emergency broadband benefit for low income Americans in the next round of stimulus;
51. and
52. **BE IT RESOLVED**, NOBEL Women calls on the FCC, Congress, and the President to
53. create a permanent broadband subsidy for low income Americans funded through
54. appropriations.

**Introduced by: The Honorable Valencia Seay**

**Georgia General Assembly**