

May 9, 2022

The Honorable Chris Holden
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 2751 (E. Garcia) Affordable Internet and Net Equality Act of 2022 - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Holden and Honorable Members of the Committee:

Common Sense supports AB 2751 (E. Garcia), which establishes affordability, awareness, and access requirements for internet service providers (ISPs). Specifically, AB 2751 addresses inequities in broadband adoption and access by requiring the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to develop and establish a Net Equality Program which would only allow ISPs to do business with state agencies if they offer affordable home internet service to households participating in public assistance programs. The program also requires ISPs to establish and advertise technical support services for eligible households to sign up over the phone.

Digital redlining has led to persistent racial and income gaps in broadband subscriptions and connectivity. Seventy-nine percent of Latino households and eighty-one percent of African-American households had broadband subscriptions in 2019, compared to the statewide average of eighty-four percent. There are also major socio-economic, age, and geographic broadband subscription gaps – rates are lower among adults 65 and older (82%), as well as among rural (73%), and low-income (76%) households. The barriers to internet adoption and access were not new to the pandemic, but were more clearly brought to light and exacerbated by the pandemic. This leaves millions of Californians without access to high-speed internet and therefore unable to connect to online learning, telehealth, remote work, and other economic opportunities.

Common Sense strongly supports policies and programs that ensure more Californians have access to high quality, affordable internet services. We also believe that internet access must be treated as a right for all Californians and not just a luxury for some. For the above reasons, we respectfully request your “Aye” vote on AB 2751.

Sincerely,



Marvin J. Deon II
Vice President, CA Policy, Common Sense Media