



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 761

Resolution supporting the goals and past achievements of the E-rate program; and further calling for a better-administered program with controlled funds to bring technology to classrooms, public libraries and rural health-care facilities.

By Council Members Brewer, Barron, Clarke, Fidler, Gerson, Jackson, James, Lopez, Nelson, Palma, Quinn, Recchia, Sanders, Seabrook and Stewart

Whereas, E-rate is a \$2.25 billion per year Federal subsidy program, created by the 1996 Telecom Act as a way to finance telephone and Internet services for schools, public libraries and rural hospitals; and

Whereas, At a time when the nation's public schools and libraries are facing severe budget deficits, E-rate provides substantial financial support of up to 90 percent of cost to bring affordable communications and Internet services to classrooms; and

Whereas, Schools and libraries in New York-one of the country's most populous states-have, over the past five years, received \$1.4 billion in financial support from the program, more than any other state except California, which received a similar amount; and

Whereas, Hearing-impaired students, who often miss out on some of the supplementary learning other students enjoy, are able to use the Internet access paid for by the E-rate program to communicate with each other and the hearing world; and

Whereas, E-mail services have enabled parents of these children, who are often also deaf, to communicate with teachers and administrators; and

Whereas, Infusing Internet and computer services into everyday school life, allows students with cognitive disabilities to become active and productive participants in society; and

Whereas, E-rate increases technology proficiency among educators and is vital to reaching the student

achievement goals stated in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that was passed with the support of President Bush; and

Whereas, Lawmakers have recently criticized the program as laden with fraud, waste and lack of proper administering of funds; and

Whereas, Beginning in August of 2004, public schools and libraries around the country stopped receiving any subsidies for E-rate causing significant financial hardships at the expense of students; and

Whereas, Low-income and minority children are more likely to have Internet access at school rather than at home, thus, getting rid of E-rate funds makes the “digital divide” - the gap between the technology haves and have-nots - more difficult to bridge; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York supports the goals and past achievements of the E-rate program; and, be it further

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls for a better-administered program with controlled funds to bring technology to classrooms, public libraries and rural health-care facilities.