



A Connected Nation's Summary of The Broadband Data Improvement Act October 9, 2008

The Broadband Data Improvement Act

Passed by unanimous consent in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, S. 1492 – the Broadband Data Improvement Act – is the culmination of almost two years of work by the Commerce Committees in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate. Congress working in a bi-partisan manner achieved consensus on a national broadband plan that includes as a cornerstone the Connected Nation model of public-private partnerships leveraging their combined power to improve the quality-of-life for all Americans.

In the Broadband Data Improvement Act, Congress agrees that broadband deployment and adoption results in enhanced economic development, enhanced public safety, healthcare and educational opportunities, and improves quality of life. The Congress also stipulates that continued progress in deployment and adoption are vital to America's future, that better federal data on broadband will help this progress, and that the federal government should assist in state efforts to create public-private partnerships.

Improved Federal Broadband Data

S. 1492 takes action to improve the knowledge of the federal government on the status of broadband in the U.S. through directives to the FCC, the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Comptroller General, and the U.S. Small Business Administration. Through new collected information from consumers and broadband providers, and studies on broadband, these provisions will help inform federal activity on broadband policy in the years to come. In addition, statewide broadband availability maps must be compiled by the Department of Commerce into a national broadband map.

Grant Program for States to Create Broadband Initiatives

The Broadband Data Improvement Act also creates a new competitive grant program to spur the creation and support of state-based broadband initiatives. In order for states to access grant funds, they must work with a nonprofit to:

- Create a statewide broadband availability map
- Increase broadband availability by working with broadband providers and the public sector
- Increase broadband adoption using grassroots demand aggregation
- Conduct research to assess the barriers to technology use
- Create a Computers4Kids™-like program that puts computers into the hands of at risk children

Statement from Connected Nation's CEO

“By passing this bill unanimously in both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, every member of Congress has promoted the importance of broadband and the related technologies that are enabled when communities and families have the ability and desire to connect to a world of opportunity. We appreciate the U.S. Congress’ support and leadership on this matter, particularly of those many Members of Congress who directly sought the input of Connected Nation as they crafted this groundbreaking legislation. Congress has demonstrated an appreciation of the need to ensure that all people, regardless of their location or socio-economic status, have the ability to realize the promises of technology. Connected Nation is heartened by both the bipartisanship demonstrated in the passage of this crucial legislation and the wide coalition of groups and interests that joined together to ensure it was passed before Congress adjourns. For the United States, this new broadband policy will mean better education, more jobs, improved healthcare, more efficient government and a better quality of life accessible for all Americans, regardless of their location or socio-economic circumstances.”

-- Brian Mefford, CEO of Connected Nation, Inc.

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About Connected Nation: Connected Nation is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that expands access to and use of broadband Internet and the related technologies that are enabled when individuals and communities have the opportunity and desire to connect. Connected Nation has a proven track record of effectively raising awareness of the value of broadband and related technologies by developing coalitions of influencers and enablers for technology deployment and adoption. Connected Nation works with community stakeholders, states and technology providers to develop and implement technology expansion programs with core competencies centered around a mission to improve digital inclusion for people and places previously underserved or overlooked.

For more information about Connected Nation, Inc., visit www.connectednation.org.