

HB0097 cross-filed with SB0066 Department of Housing and Community Development - Office of Digital Inclusion - Established (Digital Connectivity Act of 2021)

Stance: Support

Testimony: My name is Adiena C. Britt and I reside within the 45th Legislative District. I am writing to offer my full support of HB0097 and SB0066. Internet access should be treated like a utility such as water or gas & electric. This should not be a "luxury" item for only those that can afford it, as it has become a necessary component to navigating through everyday life. It is an integral part of remote school learning, proper functionality of cell phones, web-based job seeking, web-based filing of taxes, unemployment, job applications, banking, higher educational learning, and pretty much everything else we do as a society. Especially in times of Covid-19 and the ensuing restrictions on outside movements, work, and schooling. I don't think because a person or family is of modest to little means that they should be without these capabilities. Nor should they have to rely on Public hotspots, the library, or going to some public place for access. Everyone should have access in their homes, and it should be affordable.

Right now, there is a lack of competition within Baltimore City and the more remote areas of ALL MD counties for these services. This allows these few companies to charge exorbitant fees for their 'services' and they aren't forced to provide fast, reliable services everywhere; just wherever they see fit to install their operational lines. MD needs to move as fast as technology is moving, and not leave the less fortunate behind.

*I would also like to include text I received from my internet carrier in an e-mail. I have a child that is remote learning as a Senior in High School. I am already paying an exorbitant amount for services to Xfinity/Comcast and there are a lack of options for Internet access within City Limits; so they're basically bordering on a monopoly. Something should be done about this because it's extortion of funds:

"As of January 1, 2021, your Xfinity Internet Data Usage Plan includes 1.2 Terabytes (TB), which is equal to 1,229 Gigabytes (GB), of data per month. So far, you've used 75% of the data included in your plan for January 2021.

We're letting you know because beginning in March your bill can be impacted if you go over your 1.2TB (1,229GB) plan. As part of this new Data Usage Plan, you'll be charged \$10, plus tax, up to a maximum of \$100 per month for each additional 50GB of data used over 1.2TB in a month."

Thank You.

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