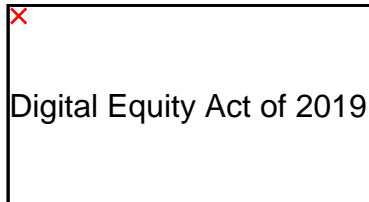




## Digital Equity Act Introduced in Congress

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On Thursday, April 11, Senator Patty Murray (D-WA), along with nine co-sponsors, introduced the Digital Equity Act of 2019.

The Digital Equity Act of 2019 would create two new annual grant programs of \$125 million each, to be distributed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The \$125 million formula grant program for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico would fund the creation and implementation of comprehensive digital equity plans in each state, while the \$125 million competitive grant program would support digital inclusion projects undertaken by individual groups, coalitions, and/or communities of interest, and the funds would also support evidence-based research to measure the effectiveness of both.

The impetus for the legislation is clear, as technology is becoming a part of so many facets of our lives and there are fears about those who could be left behind. Most Americans who cannot access the internet on a daily basis come from underrepresented and historically marginalized communities, including individuals with disabilities, from low-income backgrounds, and those living in rural areas. The same holds for students without home internet access, many of whom are now expected to use digital learning every day to access class materials and complete homework assignments. Senator Murray's office relied on information from the Pew Research Center, which estimates that 15 percent of school-aged children lack a high-speed internet connection at home. More recent data from the American Consumer Survey found that about 10 percent of students under age 18 lack either internet or computer access at home.

Nearly a dozen education organizations have endorsed the bill, including the American Library Association, the Consortium for School Networking, the International Society for Technology in Education, the Schools, Health and Libraries Broadband Coalition, and the State Educational Technology Directors Association.

Stay tuned for more information on the fate of this bill. In the meantime, you can follow the Twitter hashtag [#DigitalEquityNow](#) for the latest developments.

Legislation: [The Digital Equity Act of 2019](#)

Article: [Digital Equity Act Would Provide \\$250M Annually to Address Digital Divide](#) from EdSurge

Article: [Edtech leaders praise \\$250 million 'Digital Equity Act' for state and local government](#) from Edscoop

Article: [The digital divide is worse than we thought](#) from Techradar Pro