

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. RES. 556

Expressing the intentions of the House of Representatives concerning the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as they relate to telecommunications services to Native Americans, including Alaskan Natives.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 2, 1996

Mr. RICHARDSON (for himself, Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota; and Mr. MILLER of California) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

RESOLUTION

Expressing the intentions of the House of Representatives concerning the universal service provisions of the Telecommunications Act of 1996 as they relate to telecommunications services to Native Americans, including Alaskan Natives.

Whereas Indian and Alaskan Native people live in some of the most geographically remote areas of the country, with 50 percent of Indian and Alaskan Native people living in Oklahoma, California, South Dakota, Arizona, New Mexico, Alaska, and Washington;

Whereas Indian poverty in reservation areas is 3.9 times the national average rate;

Whereas the average phone penetration rates for rural Native Americans is only 50 percent and actual penetration rates are often much lower;

Whereas what phone service there is in Indian country is often substandard and prohibitively expensive;

Whereas the Telecommunication Act of 1996 establishes a joint Federal-State Board which is to make recommendations on how to make low-cost telephone service affordable to all and to define what is deemed to be “universal service”; and

Whereas the benefits of Federal universal service policies have often not reached Indian country: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That—

2 (1) in enacting the Telecommunications Act of
3 1996, the Congress established policies and proce-
4 dures to ensure the delivery of telecommunications
5 services to all regions of the Nation, especially rural,
6 insular, and high-cost areas, and to ensure that
7 those services are available at just, reasonable, and
8 affordable rates;

9 (2) such policies and procedures were estab-
10 lished in the belief that telecommunications services
11 have become essential to the education, public
12 health, and public safety of all people within the
13 United States; and

14 (3) no policies or procedures established to im-
15 plement this new statute can be consistent with the

1 intent of the Congress if it fails to address the tele-
2 communications needs of low-income Native Ameri-
3 cans, including Alaskan Natives.

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