

BOARD of SUPERVISORS



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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Dennis Herrera, General Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

FROM: Stephanie Cabrera, Assistant Clerk, Government Audit and Oversight Committee, Board of Supervisors

DATE: December 19, 2022

SUBJECT: LEGISLATION INTRODUCED

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The Board of Supervisors' Government Audit and Oversight Committee has received the following proposed legislation, introduced by Supervisor Preston on December 13, 2022:

**File No. 221284**

**Resolution urging internet service providers, such as AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, and similar companies to provide affordable internet connections to seniors and people with disabilities in San Francisco.**

If you have any additional comments or reports to be included with the file, please forward them to me at the Board of Supervisors, City Hall, Room 244, 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, San Francisco, CA 94102 or by email at: [Stephanie.Cabrera@sfgov.org](mailto:Stephanie.Cabrera@sfgov.org).

cc: Masood Ordikhani, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
Jeremy Spitz, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission  
Donna Hood, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

1 [Urging Internet Service Providers to Provide Truly Affordable Internet for Senior and Disabled  
2 San Franciscans]

3 **Resolution urging internet service providers, such as AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, and**  
4 **similar companies to provide affordable internet connections to seniors and people**  
5 **with disabilities in San Francisco.**

6  
7 WHEREAS, Quality internet connection is inaccessible for many seniors and people  
8 with disabilities in San Francisco, and this impact is more severe for low-income, Black and  
9 brown people and immigrants; and

10 WHEREAS, With the shift to virtual programming at the beginning of the pandemic, and  
11 the isolation faced by many older people and disabled people, staying connected to the  
12 internet is essential for survival - applying for housing, accessing medical care, searching for  
13 services, and accessing social and educational activities; and

14 WHEREAS, The 2021 Empowered San Francisco Technology Needs Assessment of  
15 disabled and senior residents reports that 64% of survey respondents find lack of access to  
16 internet and digital technology as a barrier in accessing necessary public and COVID-related  
17 services; and 28% and 27% indicate unaffordable internet and unaffordable devices,  
18 respectively, as the top two barriers in getting connected; and

19 WHEREAS, Digital redlining in low-income housing and Black and brown  
20 neighborhoods restricts access to quality internet due to infrastructural barriers—which include  
21 outdated or lacking cables, limited digital exposure and training, as well as high cost and slow  
22 speed of broadband service; and

23 WHEREAS, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo stated regarding the Biden-  
24 Harris Administration’s Internet for All Initiative on July 13, 2022, that, “meaningful internet use  
25 and [providing] people with tools,” must be provided along with basic access; and

1           WHEREAS, Governor Newsom stated in May 20, 2022, that California's success  
2 depends on broadband delivery and access to internet can make a difference between  
3 employment and unemployment; and

4           WHEREAS, California Emerging Technology Fund and the over 4,500 sponsors of the  
5 Digital Equity Bill of Rights declare that "Digital access is a 21st Century Civil Right," and must  
6 be a cornerstone of national, state and regional legislation and regulations to advance  
7 economic justice and prosperity for all; and

8           WHEREAS, Private corporations such as AT&T, Comcast, Verizon, and others hold a  
9 monopoly on the market and fail to adequately provide fast-speed and low-cost internet  
10 service options for senior and disabled people living in affordable housing and Black,  
11 Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) neighborhoods; and

12           WHEREAS, Big network providers benefited from the promotion of online activities at  
13 the start of the pandemic, while such shifts exacerbated the impact of the digital divide in  
14 senior and disabled communities; and

15           WHEREAS, These network corporations rely on federal and state subsidy programs in  
16 order to provide poor-quality, albeit, discounted service for seniors and people with  
17 disabilities, which does not address the need of low-income communities in San Francisco,  
18 where low income, due to vast economic disparities, is designated as living under 80% AMI;  
19 now, therefore, be it

20           RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco call on big broadband  
21 providers such as AT&T, Comcast, Verizon, and similar companies to provide access to high-  
22 speed Wi-Fi services to seniors and people with disabilities at all low-income housing and  
23 BIPOC neighborhoods by expanding eligibility and adjusting costs for their low-income  
24 programs based on 80% of Area Median Income (AMI) to reflect needs in San Francisco; and,  
25 be it

1           FURTHER RESOLVED, That the City and County of San Francisco call on big  
2   broadband providers such as AT&T, Comcast, Verizon, and similar companies to end  
3   practices of digital redlining and increase the base speed for internet connection, by providing  
4   quality routers, extenders, and upgrading cables to meet fiber optic standards when  
5   appropriate; and, be it

6           FURTHER RESOLVED, That That the City and County of San Francisco call on large  
7   broadband providers such as AT&T, Comcast, Verizon, and similar companies to provide  
8   simplified, quick enrollment accessible by phone, text, and online, as well as in person  
9   installment support for the discount programs for senior and disabled residents in a broad  
10  range of languages; and be it

11          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the City and  
12  County of San Francisco transmit a copy of this Resolution to the AT&T, Verizon Wireless and  
13  Comcast Regional Offices, the San Francisco Field Office of the Federal Communication  
14  Commission, and the California Public Utilities Commission.

## Introduction Form

(by a Member of the Board of Supervisors or the Mayor)

I hereby submit the following item for introduction (select only one):

- ☒ 1. For reference to Committee (Ordinance, Resolution, Motion or Charter Amendment)
- ☐ 2. Request for next printed agenda (For Adoption Without Committee Reference)  
(Routine, non-controversial and/or commendatory matters only)
- ☐ 3. Request for Hearing on a subject matter at Committee
- ☐ 4. Request for Letter beginning with "Supervisor  inquires..."
- ☐ 5. City Attorney Request
- ☐ 6. Call File No.  from Committee.
- ☐ 7. Budget and Legislative Analyst Request (attached written Motion)
- ☐ 8. Substitute Legislation File No.
- ☐ 9. Reactivate File No.
- ☐ 10. Topic submitted for Mayoral Appearance before the Board on

The proposed legislation should be forwarded to the following (please check all appropriate boxes):

- ☐ Small Business Commission      ☐ Youth Commission      ☐ Ethics Commission
- ☐ Planning Commission      ☐ Building Inspection Commission      ☐ Human Resources Department

General Plan Referral sent to the Planning Department (proposed legislation subject to Charter 4.105 & Admin 2A.53):

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No

(Note: For Imperative Agenda items (a Resolution not on the printed agenda), use the Imperative Agenda Form.)

Sponsor(s):

Supervisor Preston, Walton, Chan, Melgar, Mar and Ronen

Subject:

Urging Internet Service Providers to Provide Truly Affordable Internet for Senior and Disabled San Franciscans

Long Title or text listed:

Resolution urging internet service providers such as AT&T, Verizon, Comcast, and the like to provide affordable internet connections to seniors and people with disabilities in San Francisco.

Signature of Sponsoring Supervisor: