



Coalition of Bar Associations of Color

**RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE EXPANSION OF
THE LIFELINE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM TO BROADBAND SERVICES**

Endorsed March 2016

WHEREAS, the Coalition of Bar Associations of Color (CBAC), organized in 1992, is a coalition created to act as a collective voice for issues of common concern to its member organizations; and

WHEREAS, the member organizations of the CBAC are the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA); and

WHEREAS, the member organizations of CBAC are the national voices of their respective legal communities in the United States and its territories and possessions; and

WHEREAS, the Lifeline Assistance Program is a government benefit program that provides a discount on monthly telephone service for eligible low-income subscribers to help ensure they can connect to the nation's communications networks, find jobs, access health care services, connect with family and their children's schools, and call for help in an emergency; and

WHEREAS, the Lifeline Assistance Program eligibility applies to those who have an income that is at or below 135% of the federal Poverty Guidelines, or who are eligible for governmental assistance programs such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income, and the like; and

WHEREAS, at this time the Lifeline Assistance Program only provides eligible subscribers with a discount for one monthly telephone service (wireline or wireless) per household, but does not include broadband services of any kind; and

WHEREAS, on January 18, 2015, the FCC voted 3-2 to expand the Lifeline program for low-income consumers to include an optional credit for broadband access, and also laid out strategies to continue to curb waste and reduce fraud related to the program; and

WHEREAS, the FCC strategies for fraud prevention include removing the carrier role in determining Lifeline eligibility in order to decrease abuse, and shifting the subsidy directly to the consumer in order to promote ease of service portability; and

WHEREAS, there are 29 million households in the United States where school-age kids do not have access to broadband at home, including almost one third of low-income households; and

WHEREAS, FCC Commissioner Rosenworcel noted that kids from households without broadband at home are unable to complete their homework and will “enter the job market with a serious handicap”; and

WHEREAS, Hispanics make up the largest group of poor children under 18 years old in the United States, with 65 percent of Hispanic children—11 million—living in low-income families; and

WHEREAS, almost two million Asian Pacific Americans live at or below the poverty line, and 15.5% of households with school age children and incomes below \$50,000, lack high-speed internet access; and

WHEREAS, expansion of Lifeline to support broadband services will give many low income individuals and families opportunities for social and economic advancement that are not currently possible; and

WHEREAS, the FCC's vote is not the final step of approval, but instead sets up a public comment process and leaves open the possibility of changes to the final regulatory order.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that CBAC supports the expansion of the Lifeline Assistance Program to cover broadband access; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CBAC supports the FCC efforts to continue to curb waste and reduce fraud related to the program; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that CBAC authorizes its officers and staff to communicate the content of this resolution to other minority bar association members, members of the U.S. Congress, the press, and to whomever else suited to receive the information in order to effect this Resolution; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the legislative priority of the CBAC until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

[Remainder of page intentionally blank.]

CERTIFICATION

WE, the duly-elected Presidents of the Hispanic National Bar Association (HNBA), the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), the National Bar Association (NBA), and the National Native American Bar Association (NNABA), hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly enacted by a duly noticed meeting of the Board of Directors.



Robert T. Maldonado

Roberto Maldonado
President, Hispanic National Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date

Jim Y. Hwang

Jim Hwang
President, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date

BCP

Benjamin Crump
President, National Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date

Linda Benally

Linda Benally
President, National Native American Bar Association

March 1, 2016
Date