

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 124

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 7, 1996

By Assemblymen WOLFE and DORIA

- 1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging the Board of Public Utilities to establish
2 an advisory panel to study the issue of universal service and the impact of
3 universal service on New Jersey's educational system.
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- 5 **WHEREAS**, The education of the children of New Jersey is of the highest
6 priority and all of New Jersey's students need to acquire the critical thinking
7 and problem solving skills necessary to become productive citizens in the
8 next century; and
- 9 **WHEREAS**, It is necessary to provide all children in New Jersey with the
10 knowledge and skills necessary to become contributing members of a
11 global, information-based society; and
- 12 **WHEREAS**, Elementary and secondary schools must prepare students to use
13 the information and telecommunications technologies of the next century;
14 and
- 15 **WHEREAS**, Because schools and libraries are in a unique position to serve as
16 key points of affordable access to the information superhighway, and
17 because school- and library-based networks have the potential to become
18 community learning centers, such networks should be designed in a
19 collaborative effort with the educational community to ensure that they can
20 effectively meet the educational needs of all New Jersey residents; and
- 21 **WHEREAS**, The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 supports the goal
22 of creating a technologically rich learning environment by requiring that the
23 provision of universal service encompass deployment of advanced
24 telecommunications services to schools and libraries at discounted rates;
25 and
- 26 **WHEREAS**, The federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 specifically
27 preserves the authority of each state to adopt its own regulations,
28 consistent with any rules promulgated by the Federal Communications
29 Commission, to preserve and advance universal service, including the
30 adoption of mechanisms to support access to advanced
31 telecommunications services for schools and libraries within a state; and
- 32 **WHEREAS**, While a competitive environment is desirable, such an environment
33 alone is not adequate to ensure that telecommunications providers will offer
34 affordable rates for advanced telecommunications services to the
35 educational community, and rates for schools and libraries should be

1 sufficiently and permanently discounted to ensure that all
2 telecommunications services, including, but not limited to, the provision of
3 distance learning, video conferencing, and full graphical Internet access, are
4 truly affordable for all schools and libraries; and

5 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey educational community is a necessary participant
6 in the dialogue on how to provide educators and students with advanced
7 telecommunications services needed to improve the quality and efficiency
8 of the educational process and prepare the next generation to become
9 leaders in a technology-intensive society; and

10 **WHEREAS**, The definition of telecommunications services for schools and
11 libraries that are eligible to receive universal service support should allow
12 schools and libraries to choose from all available technologies and
13 telecommunications services, recognizing that no two schools and libraries
14 have the same technological needs, and that schools and libraries should be
15 allowed to select the most appropriate services for their individual
16 educational goals; and

17 **WHEREAS**, The New Jersey Board of Public Utilities should rely on the
18 expertise of the State's educational community, which is comprised of many
19 segments, each with its own unique perspective and expertise, in
20 developing universal service policies and regulations that are effective in
21 advancing the educational goals and objectives of the State relative to the
22 deployment of advanced telecommunications and information technologies;
23 and

24 **WHEREAS**, It is, therefore, altogether fitting and proper, and within the public
25 interest, to urge the Board of Public Utilities to establish a broad-based
26 Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service to make recommendations
27 to the board on those universal service issues that are related to and
28 impact upon New Jersey's education system; now, therefore,

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30 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

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32 1. This House urges the Board of Public Utilities to establish a broad-
33 based Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service to receive testimony
34 and other information and to advise the board on how it should design and
35 implement universal service policies and regulations to best meet the
36 educational needs of New Jersey's students and expand access for schools
37 and libraries to advanced telecommunications services.

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39 2. The Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service should represent
40 all segments of the educational community and, at a minimum, should include
41 one representative from each of the following:

42 (a) The New Jersey School Boards Association;

43 (b) The New Jersey Association of School Administrators;

- 1 (c) The New Jersey Association of School Business Officials;
2 (d) The New Jersey Education Association;
3 (e) The New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association;
4 (f) The New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers;
5 (g) The Commission on Business Efficiency of the Public Schools;
6 (h) The Joint Committee on Public Schools of the New Jersey Legislature;
7 (i) The Education Committee of the New Jersey Senate;
8 (j) The Education Committee of the New Jersey General Assembly;
9 (k) The New Jersey Department of Education; and
10 (l) The American Federation of Teachers.

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12 3. The Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service should include
13 one representative from each of the following fields: cable;
14 telecommunications; broadcast; and computer industries. The President of the
15 Board of Public Utilities and the Ratepayer Advocate should also participate
16 on the panel as ex officio members.

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18 4. The Board of Public Utilities should consider the recommendations
19 of the Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service and take such
20 recommendations fully into account before adopting any rule, regulation, or
21 policy pertaining to universal service to schools and libraries.

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23 5. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the Speaker of
24 the General Assembly and attested to by the Clerk thereof, shall be
25 transmitted to the President and Commissioners of the New Jersey Board of
26 Public Utilities and the Director of the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities'
27 Division of Telecommunications.

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STATEMENT

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32 This resolution urges the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to establish an
33 "Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service." The panel would study the
34 issue of universal service and its relationship to and impact on New Jersey's
35 educational system, and make recommendations to BPU on those universal
36 service issues that are related to and impact upon the education system.

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3 Urges BPU to establish an "Education Advisory Panel on Universal Service."