

Comments by Co-Authors of AB 14 the 'Internet for All Act of 2021'

Joint Author Assemblymember Eloise Reyes (D – San Bernadino)

"The pandemic has only emphasized and expanded the digital divide that exists in this state, especially for our vulnerable communities who have historically lacked connection. In my own county of San Bernardino, we have more than 27,000 households without internet service. I am honored to joint author Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry's bill to expand broadband infrastructure so that we can connect Californians to the resources they need to thrive in the digital age."

Joint Author Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D- Oakland)

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and expanded the gaps in broadband connectivity, and further harmed Californians in vulnerable and rural communities," said Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-Oakland), joint author of The Internet for All Act. "Now more than ever, we must close this digital divide and ensure all Californians have the access they need for employment, telemedicine, distance learning, and other vital online activities."

Joint Author Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva (D- Fullerton)

"The digital divide that we see across the state has made it clear that students struggling to connect to broadband will fall even further behind," said Assemblywoman Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton).

Joint Author Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D- Bell Gardens)

"In light of the COVID - 19 pandemic, it is now more evident than ever that broadband internet connectivity issues for our students has further widened the gap between those with access and those without. Our most vulnerable students in both rural and urban areas are being left further behind with each day they can't sign onto their classes or get kicked out of a lesson due to low internet speeds. AB ___ ensures that my community and disadvantaged communities around the state get the internet access and speeds that will help bring our homes into the 21st Century," said Assemblymember Cristina Garcia.

Joint Author Assemblymember Robert Rivas (D -Hollister)

"The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities experienced by low-income residents and communities of color in our state, and that certainly includes the digital divide," said Assemblymember Robert Rivas (D-Hollister), joint author of AB XXX. "As our jobs, schools and social gatherings moved almost exclusively online, those who lacked access to broadband internet were placed at a huge disadvantage. AB XXX will help bridge this crucial gap, so vulnerable communities are not left behind."

Joint Author Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia (D-Coachella):

"It is imperative that the Legislature come together to rectify California's internet disparities and ease the connectivity burden on our families. The deployment of broadband infrastructure is a matter of public health, safety, education, and economic urgency for disconnected communities. After our collective success in 2017 with AB

1665 the Internet for All Now Act, which extended \$300 million into the California Advanced Services Fund, I am proud to once again partner with Assemblymember Aguiar-Curry and build on our policy efforts to bridge the digital divide.”

Joint Author Assemblymember Bill Quirk:

“The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated that reliable broadband internet is seriously lacking in many rural and urban communities. This impacts our children’s ability to learn, and adults’ ability to work from home. Internet access is an immediate and critical need. This legislation addresses these inequities” said Assemblymember Quirk (D-Hayward).

Joint Author Assemblymember Miguel Santiago:

"Thousands of Californians continue to face inadequate internet access that makes it difficult to conduct daily life," said Assembly Member Santiago (D-Los Angeles). "We must commit to providing free internet to everyone in our state. Reliable and high quality internet ensures no one is left behind. Now is the time to meet the needs of our community."

Principal Co-Author Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo:

“California’s most vulnerable and underserved rural and urban communities’ access to adequate broadband infrastructure has been further exacerbated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We live in a digital era where reliable internet connectivity is a critical necessity even more so with social distancing and online learning. The Internet for All Act of 2021 is needed now more than ever and it is why I am honored to be a co-author,” said Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo (D- Los Angeles).

Principal Co-Author Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin:

“The COVID-19 Pandemic has underscored the need to ensure that all Californians, in urban, suburban, and rural areas have reliable access to modern communications technology. **AB XX** achieves this with a framework to connect the most underserved communities to broadband internet. This legislation also focuses on supporting families that are navigating for the first time virtual education and telehealth, which we know is crucial for the development of our children and the health of our society as whole.”

Principal Co-Author Assemblymember Rebbeca Bauer-Kahan:

“Access to broadband in 2020 is a fundamental right, especially for our struggling students who have been forced to learn remotely due to the pandemic and patients who need access to life saving critical telehealth options. It is incumbent upon all of us to provide the tools necessary for these critical functions.”

Co-Author Assemblymember Autumn Burke:

The COVID pandemic has illuminated our state's digital divide and exposed the disparities impacting underserved urban and rural communities, people of color, and small businesses. Establishing comprehensive statewide investment for broadband infrastructure and high-speed internet will allow all Californians to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

Co-Author Assemblymember Buffy Wicks:

"The digital divide weighs most heavily on communities that are already disproportionately impacted by this pandemic - many juggling working full-time with the second job of ensuring a quality education for their child," said Assemblymember Buffy Wicks, (D-Oakland). "California families are already doing everything they can to adjust to this new reality, a reality that depends on reliable, high-quality broadband access. Now, it's incumbent upon the legislature to make sure these connectivity needs are being met, and that no adult, child, or family falls behind because they aren't."

Co-Author Senator Monique Limón:

"It is imperative that Californians have broadband accessibility in all areas of our state. We are seeing that during the COVID-19 pandemic, children in underserved communities struggle to connect to distant learning and continue their education due to the lack of broadband access in their communities. Digital Equity is necessary for civic and cultural participation, employment, distance learning, and access to essential services."

Joint Author Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris:

"The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the digital divide, especially for California kids. Far too many students are unable to learn because they lack basic internet access at home," said AB 14 co-author Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach). "The Internet for All Act of 2021 is a critical part of California's strategy to combat learning loss and ensure that all California kids have the opportunity to succeed."