

By: Naishtat

H.B. No. 1768

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the use of the universal service fund to provide Internet service to certain persons with an impairment of hearing.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 56.021, Utilities Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 56.021. UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND ESTABLISHED. The commission shall adopt and enforce rules requiring local exchange companies to establish a universal service fund to:

(1) assist telecommunications providers in providing basic local telecommunications service at reasonable rates in high cost rural areas under two plans:

(A) the Texas High Cost Universal Service Plan (16 T.A.C. Section 26.403); and

(B) the Small and Rural Incumbent Local Exchange Company Universal Service Plan (16 T.A.C. Section 26.404);

(2) reimburse the telecommunications carrier that provides the statewide telecommunications relay access service under Subchapter D;

(3) finance the specialized telecommunications assistance program established under Subchapter E;

(4) reimburse the department and the commission for costs incurred in implementing this chapter and Chapter 57;

(5) reimburse a telecommunications carrier providing

lifeline service as provided by 47 C.F.R. Part 54, Subpart E, as amended;

(6) finance the implementation and administration of an integrated eligibility process created under Section 17.007 for customer service discounts relating to telecommunications services, including outreach expenses the commission determines are reasonable and necessary;

(7) reimburse a designated provider under Subchapter F;

(8) reimburse a successor utility under Subchapter G; ~~and~~

(9) finance the program established under Subchapter H; and

(10) reimburse a telecommunications carrier that provides Internet service under Subchapter I.

SECTION 2. Chapter 56, Utilities Code, is amended by adding Subchapter I to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER I. INTERNET SERVICE PROGRAM FOR PERSONS WITH IMPAIRMENT
OF HEARING

Sec. 56.351. INTERNET SERVICE PROGRAM. The commission by rule shall establish and implement a program to provide from the universal service fund reimbursement for free or discounted Internet service provided by a telecommunications carrier to a person with an impairment of hearing who is eligible for lifeline service as provided by 47 C.F.R. Part 54, Subpart E, as amended.

SECTION 3. This Act takes effect September 1, 2015.