

February 1, 2022

To: Committee Chair John Lively
Committee Vice Chair Jami Cate
Committee Vice Chair Jason Kropf
Members of the Committee

From: Susan Schaefer

Re: Support for HB 4092 - Broadband Governance, Availability & Equity

Prior to moving to Ashland, OR in September 2020, I lived in the San Francisco Bay area for over 30 years. In that time I witnessed tremendous growth with internet availability, as did so many other cities in California and across the country.

But with that growth came the divide; those who lived in the “super highway” neighborhood and those who did not. Along with that availability also came the additional line item in the family budget.

As a Docent in the Spirit of the Old West Gallery at the Blackhawk Museum in Danville, CA, I witnessed this divide. I had 4th and 5th grade students, who were equipped with iPads in order to record what they were learning to augment their reports. iPads given to them by their schools with internet connection.

These tours were followed by students from outlining areas who did not have internet connections in their homes, nor had they been to their local library to use their computers, if available. Some of these communities were outside the broadband area making it difficult for students, their parents and teachers. I wonder how they handled their education during the pandemic.

We all know the importance of having information available at our fingertips. Not taking it for granted is a step in the right direction to help those who do not have this access. My experience with this gap is just one of many you will read about. I hope it makes a positive impact on your decision.

I urge you to vote yes on HB 4092. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Susan Schaefer
AAUW Member
Ashland, OR