

AB 1560 (DALY): DISTANCE LEARNING: PUPIL ACCESS

POSITION: The Chamber's Public Policy Committee voted to SUPPORT the bill on April 13, 2021. The Board of Directors voted to SUPPORT the bill on April 22, 2021.

RATIONALE: COVID laid bare the disparities in the digital divide. This bill simply authorizes a new tool for the state to use to bridge that gap for students.

STATUS: AB 1560 (Daly) was introduced by Assemblymember Tom Daly on February 19, 2021. It was passed unanimously out of the Assembly Education Committee on April 7, 2021 and is currently in the Senate.

SUMMARY

AB 1560 directs the State Superintendent of Education to survey all school districts throughout the state to identify the number of students lacking access to broadband and/or a device. The bill also creates a framework to connect students in K-12 to low cost or free broadband service through one of two options. The first option would be information about broadband providers' low cost service plans that would be posted on the Superintendent's website. The second would authorize but not require, the California Department of Technology to purchase (at discounted bulk pricing) broadband services for eligible students.

INDUSTRY/IES IMPACTED

AB 1560 would impact the broadband and telecommunication industry.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SUPPORTERS

- California Cable & Telecommunications Association
- Downtown San Diego Partnership

OPPONENTS

- None known at time of writing

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR

School-aged children have borne the brunt of the digital divide during the pandemic. As a result, the gaps for access to internet and/or a device to access it with require state policy changes to support students in need. This bill authorizes the state to begin work to create real solutions.

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

School districts are not equipped to monitor such information and will likely prove to be ineffective in the administration of such programs should this bill pass.