

New York State Bar Association

House of Delegates Resolution on Broadband Access

Adopted on Saturday, June 27, 2020

WHEREAS, the New York State Bar Association (“NYSBA”) supported resolution 10B at the 2019 American Bar Association (“ABA”) annual meeting which was adopted by the ABA House of Delegates and called on Congress, state, local, territorial, and tribal legislatures to enact legislation and appropriate adequate funding to ensure equal access to justice for Americans living in rural communities by assuring affordable high speed broadband access is provided throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, in April 2020, the NYSBA House of Delegates adopted the exhaustive report of the NYSBA Task Force on Rural Justice, which documented that, inter alia, there is a significant lack of technology infrastructure in vast portions of New York State, that large portions of New York State have limited broadband availability and some areas are completely without any broadband service whatsoever; and

WHEREAS, the report of the NYSBA Task Force on Rural Justice recommended, inter alia, that NYSBA adopt a resolution that urges New York State to ensure that broadband access reaches all corners of New York State; and

WHEREAS, the Covid-19 pandemic, stay-in-place order and quarantine have made it abundantly clear that broadband service is an important communications tool which has become vitally necessary for educational purposes, medical care (“telemedicine”), business and commerce, as well as access to justice; and

WHEREAS, there has been unprecedented unemployment as a result of the Covid19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, a public works program to build sufficient broadband access throughout New York State would provide significant employment opportunities to a large number of New Yorkers and provide badly-needed broadband access to New York citizens who currently have unreliable broadband service, or none at all;

NOW THEREFORE, NYSBA urges the Governor of the State of New York and the New York State Legislature to prioritize and appropriate funding sufficient to provide affordable high speed broadband access to all corners of New York State, with emphasis and urgency on rural areas; and

NYSBA further urges the President of the United States and the United States Congress to prioritize and appropriate funding for the expansion of a 21st century digital infrastructure sufficient to provide affordable high speed broadband access to all areas of the nation, with emphasis and urgency on rural areas.