

ANALYSES OF PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

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Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Joint Chair Speaker Dade Phelan, Joint Chair
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SUMMARY OF COMMENTS

The following comments supporting or opposing the proposed amendment reflect positions that were presented in committee proceedings, during house or senate floor debate, or in the analysis of the resolution prepared by the House Research Organization (HRO) when the resolution was considered by the House of Representatives.

Comments by Supporters

- Establishing a fund to support broadband expansion and infrastructure investment would provide resources to close the digital divide in Texas, which in turn could help to improve quality of life and lead to increased economic growth.
- Without reliable access to broadband Internet, millions of Texans are at a disadvantage in seeking employment opportunities and accessing certain educational and health care services that are increasingly going virtual.
- By investing state dollars in the expansion of broadband infrastructure, the state would be well positioned to draw down funds from the federal Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program, which matches state dollars on a four-to-one basis.
- A state funding source for broadband expansion will provide much-needed flexibility in achieving broadband attainment goals that is missing with federal programs that come with certain added constraints.

Comments by Opponents

- The broadband infrastructure fund should be required to prioritize projects that develop fiber optic broadband infrastructure, which may be faster, safer, and more durable and reliable than wireless broadband.
- Texas has previously allocated \$600 million for broadband purposes, and the state is likely to receive billions of dollars from the federal BEAD program for these purposes. Creating a costly new broadband fund with state taxpayer dollars is excessive and fiscally irresponsible.