

June 28, 2021

Chairman Miguel Santiago
Communications and Conveyance Committee
California State Assembly
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Support for California SB 556

Chairman Miguel Santiago,

We are a coalition of community organizations devoted to serving LGBTQ+ communities in California. We are committed to providing resources to homeless LGBTQ+ youth and closing the digital divide. Accordingly, we write you today in support of California SB 556 because wireless network deployment is vital for keeping our communities connected to critical services.

Grounded in empirical research, we develop programs and resources that support LGBTQ+ individuals and work to educate organizations and policy makers on the unique needs LGBTQ+ individuals face when it comes to technology. Specifically, the LGBT Technology Partnership & Institute developed and operates the PowerOn Program, where affiliated PowerOn centers (the undersigned Sacramento LGBT Community Center, Diversity Center of Santa Cruz County, LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert, LGBTQ Center Long Beach, and Los Angeles LGBT Center) distribute mobile devices to connect underserved homeless LGBTQ+ youth.

Our goal is to help our LGBTQ+ community members find stability, guidance, and ultimately build toward financial independence. Beyond serving as a means for finding community assistance, wireless is also about access to health and safety resources. Passage of this bill would have a positive impact on our community, the majority of whom do not have landline service and rely exclusively on wireless. Fifth-generation (5G) networks have the potential to make a tremendous impact on our communities and LGBT Tech understands the importance of removing barriers to deploying 5G.

As a minority group, the LGBTQ+ community faces uphill battles when looking for a doctor—81 percent of LGBTQ+ youth cite the Internet as critical for securing healthcare providers and medical information. The low latency, capacity, and speeds of 5G present a stronger network that will give more Californians access to innovations like connected health. This means flexible and tailored treatments, access to a wider variety of specialists, and a greater market for care.

For our community, wireless is a crucial link to employment, social services, health care, and other essential resources. We are encouraged that the California Senate is considering this bill, which would facilitate the deployment of wireless infrastructure necessary to modernize the mobile networks that LGBTQ+ Californians rely upon. For the above reasons,

we ask that you pass SB 556, which will allow cutting-edge wireless technologies to improve the ability to support your most vulnerable community members.

Los Angeles LGBT Center
1118 N McCadden Place
Los Angeles, CA 90038

Sacramento LGBT Community Center
1015 20th Street
Sacramento, CA 95811

The LGBTQ Community Center of The Desert
The McDonald/Wright Building
1301 North Palm Canyon Dr., 3rd Floor
Palm Springs, CA 92262

The LGBT Center Long Beach
2017 East 4th Street
Long Beach, CA 90814

LGBT Technology Partnership & Institute
123 W. Frederick St., #214
Staunton, VA 24402

CC: Communications and Conveyance Committee Members and the Honorable Senator Bill Dodd

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