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House Bill 75 Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to funding for Internet services for school districts.”

Alaska’s constitution clearly establishes a requirement for the state to provide an education to all its children, regardless of where that student resides. However, Alaska’s test scores and graduation rates are consistently below national averages. Our students deserve better outcomes.

House Bill 75 aims to improve education outcomes across the state by improving access to broadband in schools, including those in our most remote communities. Improved internet access means students and teachers will be able to tap into additional educational resources that they would otherwise be unable to access at slower speeds.

In 2014, the Alaska State Legislature passed a bill to create the Broadband Assistance Grant program to assist school districts with the cost of Internet services and ensure that all schools achieved a download speed of 10 Megabits per second (Mbps). By raising the floor from 10 Mbps to 25 Mbps, House Bill 75 will more than double the number of students who can access distance learning content at any given time, without any additional infrastructure.

It is time to update the minimum Internet speed in statute to align with the increased bandwidth needs of today’s students.

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