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Chris Wilson, Communications Consultant
Chris.wilson@asm.ca.gov
(310) 324-6408

UC Berkeley Poll Results Support Bill Co-authored by Gipson to Close California's Digital Divide

CARSON, Calif --- A UC Berkeley Institute for Government Studies (IGS) Poll released today on home broadband adoption provides further evidence for the Internet For all Now Act of 2017 (AB 1665), a bipartisan bill co-authored by Assemblymember Mike A. Gipson (D-Carson).

"Access to the internet is beyond needed, it's a must" said Asm. Gipson. "I'm honored to co-author this very important measure that seeks to deliver access to our most disenfranchised communities. It's about time we move forward, together."

The IGS Poll finds that among the 87 percent of Californians with a home high-speed Internet connection (referred to generically as "broadband"), 18 percent have access through a smartphone only, while 69 percent report having broadband Internet access through a computing device. The poll confirms that the most disadvantaged residents remain offline and "underconnected."

Cost is by far the single biggest factor preventing those without Internet connectivity at home from going online. Of those without Internet access at home, 69 percent cite broadband service expense or not owning a computer or smartphone as a reason for not being connected, and 34 percent say this is their main reason. Another 44 percent of these respondents cite home Internet as too difficult to set up and learn, confirming the need for adoption assistance and digital literacy training in California.

Indicating broadband infrastructure problems, another 19 percent report that Internet service is not available where they live. This latter finding is corroborated by an April 2016 report of the California Public Utilities Commission, which found that 43 percent of rural California households can't get reliable broadband Internet, for a total of 424,000 households.

These findings are particularly relevant as the California Legislature nears the close of the 2017 session and decides whether to pass the Internet For All Now Act (AB 1665), a $330 million broadband infrastructure and adoption bill that extends for five years the California Advanced Services Fund established by the Legislature and California Public Utilities Commission in 2008 to broadband support availability in unserved and underserved areas of California.

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