

**ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT  
RESOLUTION No. 171**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MAY 4, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY**

**District 27 (Essex and Morris)**

**Assemblywoman PAMELA R. LAMPITT**

**District 6 (Burlington and Camden)**

**Assemblyman ROBERT J. KARABINCHAK**

**District 18 (Middlesex)**

**Co-Sponsored by:**

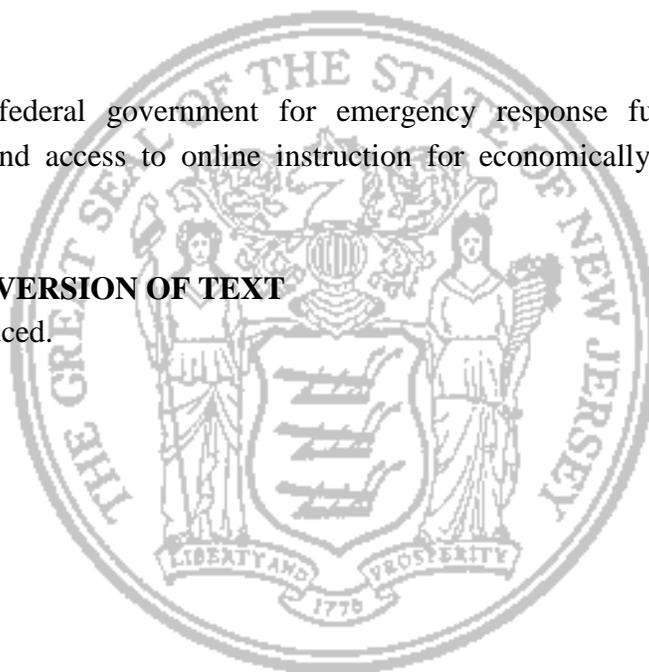
**Assemblywomen Vainieri, Huttler, Quijano, Reynolds-Jackson,  
Assemblyman Caputo, Assemblywomen Pinkin, Carter, Assemblyman  
Mejia, Assemblywomen Tucker, Jimenez, Downey, McKnight,  
Assemblyman McKeon, Assemblywoman Swain and Assemblyman  
Chiaravalloti**

**SYNOPSIS**

Petitions federal government for emergency response funding to help schools expand access to online instruction for economically disadvantaged students.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



**(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/29/2020)**

1 **A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION** respectfully petitioning the federal  
2 government for emergency response funding to help schools  
3 expand access to online instruction among economically  
4 disadvantaged students.  
5  
6 **WHEREAS**, The provision of a thorough and efficient education to all  
7 children in New Jersey, especially those who are economically  
8 disadvantaged, not only fulfills a constitutional obligation of this  
9 State, but also serves as an investment in the long-term prosperity  
10 of this country; and  
11 **WHEREAS**, Following the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus,  
12 COVID-19, the Governor issued a series of executive orders to  
13 declare a public health emergency and order the closure of all  
14 public, private, and parochial schools in the State; and  
15 **WHEREAS**, According to guidance issued by the Department of  
16 Education (DOE), school districts impacted by the closure may  
17 provide home instruction services, including online instruction, to  
18 all enrolled students during this time; and  
19 **WHEREAS**, While the DOE requires school districts to provide all  
20 students with equitable access to home instruction services, the  
21 reliance on online instruction has limited the ability of certain  
22 students, whose homes lack internet access, to receive the same  
23 level of educational services as their classmates; and  
24 **WHEREAS**, Despite the best efforts of the teachers of this State,  
25 educational disparities resulting from the lack of internet access  
26 threaten to widen the educational achievement gap that exists  
27 between affluent and lower-income households; and  
28 **WHEREAS**, In response to the outbreak of COVID-19, the federal  
29 government enacted the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic  
30 Security Act” (CARES Act), which made approximately \$13.5  
31 billion available to local education agencies through the Elementary  
32 and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSERF); and  
33 **WHEREAS**, Although the CARES Act permits local education agencies  
34 to use monies received from the ESSERF to purchase educational  
35 technologies that support online instruction, this authorization fails  
36 to ensure that all students who lack internet access can participate in  
37 online instruction; and  
38 **WHEREAS**, Absent an additional round of federal emergency response  
39 funding that dedicates monies to expanding access to online  
40 instruction for economically disadvantaged students, these students  
41 will continue to fall further behind their classmates, thereby  
42 prolonging the educational disparities that result from the outbreak  
43 of COVID-19; and  
44 **WHEREAS**, As a model for this funding, the “Emergency Educational  
45 Connections Act of 2020,” pending before Congress as H.R.6563,  
46 would appropriate \$2 billion to the federal E-Rate Program for  
47 schools and libraries to purchase Wi-fi hotspots, connected devices  
48 (e.g., laptops, tablets, etc.), and other equipment necessary for

1 students and staff members to access online instruction during the  
2 public health emergency; and  
3 **WHEREAS**, Emergency response funding of this nature promises to  
4 reduce the unnecessary educational disparities that result from  
5 public health-related school closures; and  
6 **WHEREAS**, Accordingly, the Legislature respectfully petitions the  
7 federal government to enact legislation, such as “Emergency  
8 Educational Connections Act of 2020,” to provide such funding as  
9 is necessary to ensure that all students have equitable access to  
10 online instruction in the event of a public health-related school  
11 closure; now, therefore,

12  
13 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the General Assembly of the State of New  
14 Jersey (the Senate concurring):

15  
16 1. The Legislature of the State of New Jersey respectfully  
17 petitions the Congress and President to enact legislation, such as the  
18 “Emergency Educational Connections Act of 2020,” that provides  
19 additional emergency response funding to help schools expand  
20 access to online instruction among economically disadvantaged  
21 students in the event of a public health-related school closure.

22  
23 2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of the  
24 State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or  
25 the Secretary of the Senate to the President and Vice-President of  
26 the United States, the Majority and Minority Leaders of the United  
27 States Senate, the Speaker and Minority Leader of the United States  
28 House of Representatives, and each member of the United States  
29 Congress elected from the State of New Jersey.

30  
31

32 **STATEMENT**

33  
34 This concurrent resolution respectfully petitions the federal  
35 government to provide additional emergency response funding to  
36 help schools expand access to online instruction during public  
37 health-related school closures.

38 Following the recent outbreak of the novel coronavirus, COVID-  
39 19, the Governor issued a series of executive orders to declare a  
40 public health emergency and order the closure of all public, private,  
41 and parochial schools in the State. According to guidance issued by  
42 the Department of Education (DOE), school districts impacted by  
43 the closure may provide home instruction services, including online  
44 instruction, to all enrolled students during this time.

45 While the DOE requires school districts to provide all students  
46 with equitable access to home instruction services, the reliance on  
47 online instruction has limited the ability of certain students, whose  
48 homes lack internet access, to receive the same level of educational

1 services as their classmates. Despite the best efforts of the teachers  
2 of this State, educational disparities resulting from the lack of  
3 internet access threaten to widen the educational achievement gap  
4 that exists between affluent and lower-income households.

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6 government enacted the “Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic  
7 Security Act” (CARES Act), which made approximately \$13.5  
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14 online instruction.

15 Absent an additional round of federal emergency response  
16 funding that dedicates monies to expanding access to online  
17 instruction for economically disadvantaged students, these students  
18 will continue to fall further behind their classmates, thereby  
19 prolonging the educational disparities that result from the outbreak  
20 of COVID-19. As a model for this funding, the “Emergency  
21 Educational Connections Act of 2020,” pending before Congress as  
22 H.R.6563, would appropriate \$2 billion to the federal E-Rate  
23 Program for schools and libraries to purchase Wi-fi hotspots,  
24 connected devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, etc.), and other equipment  
25 necessary for students and staff members to access online  
26 instruction during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

27 Emergency response funding of this nature promises to reduce  
28 the unnecessary educational disparities that result from public  
29 health-related school closures. Accordingly, the Legislature  
30 respectfully petitions the federal government to take such action as  
31 is necessary to ensure that all students have equitable access to  
32 online instruction in the event of a public health-related school  
33 closure.