



Kentucky *youth* Advocates

10200 Linn Station Rd  
Suite 310  
Louisville, KY 40223

502.895.8167  
888.825.5592

[kyyouth.org](http://kyyouth.org)

To: Speaker David Osborne  
From: Dr. Terry I. Brooks  
Date: February 25, 2019  
Subj: Senate Bill 141 – Lifeline Phone Service

As you know, Kentucky Youth Advocates (KYA) believes that you cannot separate the well-being of children from the well-being of their families. And the well-being of families often are dependent on seemingly unrelated issues.

Such is the case with SB 141 and KYA would like to express its opposition to that pending legislation, that will make it difficult or impossible for wireless Lifeline providers to continue offering federal wireless Lifeline benefits to low-income families in the Commonwealth.

The Lifeline program provides a monthly benefit valued at \$9.25 so that eligible households can afford basic but modern wireless telecommunications service, including voice service and limited internet access. SB 141 would require wireless Lifeline providers to pay E911 fees of \$.70 per month for each Lifeline household, which is equivalent to a 7.6% tax on the Lifeline program.

Lifeline is paid for by the federal universal service fund (USF). All telephone customers in the Commonwealth pay into USF as a surcharge on their phone bills. These federal dollars are then returned to the Commonwealth as \$9.25/month in Lifeline benefits to our low-income citizens. It does not make sense to pass legislation like SB 141 that will make it difficult or impossible for these federal dollars to be returned to Kentucky. SB 141 will have the effect of diverting these benefits to other states, not a wise public policy for Kentucky.

We understand that one of the purposes of SB 141 is to circumvent federal tax policy passed last year by Congress and signed by President Trump. This law is 47 USC 1510. Bills aimed at circumventing federal law will likely be declared unconstitutional and should not be enacted by the Legislature.

We would like to bring to the Senate's attention that AT&T, once one of the leading providers of Lifeline, suspended Lifeline in most areas of the Commonwealth in 2018 as approved by an order of the Kentucky Public Service Commission. The understanding was that this would not harm the Lifeline program because wireless Lifeline providers would provide service to these customers. If SB 141 is enacted and wireless Lifeline providers no longer provide service, customers will no longer have a landline Lifeline option in most areas. They will be left without phone service.

In summary, we respectfully request that the House stand against vote against SB 141 and that it not be enacted.

Sincerely,



Kentucky's independent voice for kids