

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES, AND ENERGY

BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H.3506

TITLE: An Act relative to digital inclusion for seniors

SPONSOR: Representative Tara T. Hong

COMMITTEE: Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy

HEARING DATE: May 6, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: *New bill*

CURRENT LAW:

M.G.L. c. 25C establishes the Department of Telecommunications and Cable, which oversees telecommunications in the Commonwealth.

SUMMARY:

This bill adds a new section to Chapter 25C and establishes a low-income senior internet subsidy program that would provide financial assistance to eligible low-income seniors for internet services.

It directs DTC to:

- i.offer monthly subsidies of up to \$50 to offset the cost of home internet services; and
- ii.partner with internet service providers to offer discounted plans tailored to low-income seniors (individuals aged 65 or older whose household income does not exceed 200 per cent of the federal poverty level).

Subject to appropriation, the executive office of housing and livable communities will allocate grants to senior living facilities for the installation and maintenance of free public Wi-Fi hotspots. The grants would prioritize funding for:

- i.facilities serving communities with limited digital infrastructure; or
- ii.high concentrations of low-income residents.