SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program Act. Requires the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to establish an Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program (Program) to ensure the availability and affordability of broadband service to low income families in order to access remote learning and work platforms. Provides that the Department shall coordinate with Local Administrative Agencies to determine eligibility for the Program, provided that eligible income shall be no more than 150% of the federal poverty level. Provides that families whose annual household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty level shall be eligible for free broadband service. Provides that a credit of at least $9.95 a month for broadband services shall be payable monthly to: (i) families whose annual household income is above 135% of the federal poverty level but no greater than 150% of the federal poverty level; and (ii) families that include at least one adult person or dependent child who qualifies for or participates in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Supplemental Security Income program, Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefits Programs, and other specified assistance programs. Provides that the $9.95 broadband service credit may be adjusted according to family size. Provides that families who participate in the federal Lifeline program or any other State Internet service subsidy program shall not be eligible to participate in the Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program. Provides bill payment requirements. Provides for the adoption of rules.
AN ACT concerning State government.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program Act.

Section 5. Definitions. As used in this Section:

"Broadband service" means a high speed service connection to the public Internet capable of supporting, in at least one direction, a speed in excess of 200 kilobits per second (kbps) to the network demarcation point at the subscriber's premises.

"Department" means the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

"Economic unit" means all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household.

"Family" or "household" means any individual or group of individuals who live together at the same address as one economic unit.

"Federal poverty level" means the poverty guidelines updated periodically in the Federal Register by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These guidelines set poverty levels by family size.

Section 10. Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance
Program. The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity shall establish an Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program to ensure the availability and affordability of broadband service to low income families. The Department shall coordinate with Local Administrative Agencies to determine eligibility for the Program, provided that eligible income shall be no more than 150% of the federal poverty level.

Section 15. Eligible families.

(a) Families whose annual household income is at or below 135% of the federal poverty level shall be eligible for free broadband service.

(b) A credit of at least $9.95 a month for broadband services shall be payable monthly to:

(1) families whose annual household income is above 135% of the federal poverty level but no greater than 150% of the federal poverty level; and

(2) families that include at least one adult person or dependent child who qualifies for or received benefits under one of the following programs:

   (A) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

   (B) Supplemental Security Income program.

   (C) Veterans Pension and Survivors Benefits Programs.

   (D) Federal Public Housing Assistance Program.

   (E) Medical Assistance Program under Article V of
the Illinois Public Aid Code.

(F) Tribal Programs for Native Americans.

(G) National School Lunch Program.

Credit amounts provided under this subsection (b) may be adjusted according to family size as prescribed by the Department.

(c) Families who receive a discount for broadband service under the federal Lifeline program or any other State Internet service subsidy program shall not be eligible to participate in the Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program if they elect to remain enrolled in the aforementioned programs.

Section 20. Eligibility. To be eligible for free broadband service or a monthly credit for broadband service under this Act an applicant must provide proof of eligibility in the form and manner prescribed by the Department.

Section 25. Broadband service payments and credit.

(a) For each family enrolled in the Illinois Low Income Broadband Assistance Program, the Department shall remit, through the Local Administrative Agencies, to the broadband service provider that portion of the family's bill that is not the responsibility of the family. For purposes of this Section, payment is due on the date specified on the family's bill. The Department, the Department of Revenue, and Local Administrative Agencies shall adopt processes that provide for
the timely payment required by this Section.

(b) Each family that receives a credit for broadband service under subsection (b) of Section 15 is responsible for all actual charges for broadband service in excess of the credit provided under subsection (b) of Section 15. The Department may terminate a program participant's eligibility for the credit available under subsection (b) of Section 15 upon notification by the broadband service provider that the participant's monthly service payment is more than 45 days past due.

Section 30. Rules. The Department may adopt any rules necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.