



Digital Global Access Policy Act (H.R.600) (Digital GAP Act)

The Problem: In today's technology-driven world, internet access is a major driver of economic and social improvement. However, 4.2 billion people - about 60 percent of the world's population - remain offline. These individuals are primarily located in the developing world where internet access is hindered by inadequate infrastructure and a poor regulatory environment thus stifling the potential for sustainable growth and development.

The Solution: The Digital Global Access Policy (GAP) Act seeks to promote first-time internet access to mobile or broadband internet for at least 1.5 billion people in both urban and rural areas of developing countries by 2020.

What does the Digital GAP Act aim to do?

The Digital GAP Act would make a myriad of positive changes in resource-poor communities including: spurring economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty and gender inequality and improving health education by:

- Removing tax and regulatory barriers to internet access.
- Promoting internet deployment and related coordination, capacity building, and build-once policies and approaches in developing countries.
- Promoting the use of the internet to increase economic growth and trade.
- Encouraging the use of the internet to bolster democracy, government accountability, transparency and human rights.
- Promoting internet access and inclusion into internet policymaking for women, people with disabilities, minorities, low-income and marginalized groups and underserved populations.

The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will have the responsibility of establishing and incorporating efforts to increase internet access, creating and expanding the necessary technologies and improving digital literacy into education, development and economic growth programs.

Other Noteworthy Facts

- The Digital GAP Act was introduced by Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA-39) in the 114th Congress as H.R.5537
- The bill was reintroduced in the 115th Congress as H.R.600.
- The Digital GAP Act passed in the U.S. House of Representatives without amendment on January 24, 2017.