

- SUBJECT:** Waiving broadband fees for certain disadvantaged students
- COMMITTEE:** Public Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Dutton, Allen, Allison, K. Bell, Bernal, Buckley, M. González, Huberty, K. King, Meza, Talarico, VanDeaver
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Lozano
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Andrea Chevalier, Association of Texas Professional Educators; Chloe Latham Sikes, Intercultural Development Research Association; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.; Greg Hansch and Ana O'Quin, National Alliance on Mental Illness Texas; Charles Gaines, Raise Your Hand Texas; Alison Fernandez, Spark Change Project; Grover Campbell, TASB; Dena Donaldson, Texas AFT; Barry Haenisch, Texas Association of Community Schools; Paige Williams, Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Laura Atlas Kravitz, Texas State Teachers Association; Jarod Love, The College Board; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; Kenneth Flippin, US Green Building Council Texas Chapter; Thomas Parkinson)
- Against — None
- On — Gaby Rowe, Texas Education Agency; (*Registered, but did not testify:* Eric Marin, Texas Education Agency)
- BACKGROUND:** It has been noted that projects are in development to deliver at-home broadband to more than one million students who currently lack access. Interested parties have suggested that students who qualify for free and reduced lunch programs could benefit from free broadband internet access.
- DIGEST:** HB 3889 would specify that if the Texas Education Agency established a program providing broadband internet access to public school students,

the agency could not require a student who was educationally disadvantaged to pay any fees or costs for the program.

The agency would be required to adopt rules as necessary to implement the provisions of the bill.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2021.