

S 102

Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act of 2017

Congress: 115 (2017–2019, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Science, Technology, Communications

Introduced: Jan 11, 2017

Current Status: Held at the desk.

Latest Action: Held at the desk. (Sep 12, 2017)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/102>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Cantwell, Maria [D-WA]

Party: Democratic • **State:** WA • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (6 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Booker, Cory A. [D-NJ]	D · NJ		Jan 11, 2017
Sen. Nelson, Bill [D-FL]	D · FL		Jan 11, 2017
Sen. Rubio, Marco [R-FL]	R · FL		Jan 11, 2017
Sen. Thune, John [R-SD]	R · SD		Jan 11, 2017
Sen. Menendez, Robert [D-NJ]	D · NJ		Feb 13, 2017
Sen. Schumer, Charles E. [D-NY]	D · NY		Sep 11, 2017

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Reported By	Apr 5, 2017

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Science, Technology, Communications

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
115 HR 588	Related bill	Jan 24, 2017: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

(This measure has not been amended since it was reported to the Senate on April 5, 2017. The summary of that version is repeated here.)

Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act of 2017

(Sec. 2) This bill expresses the sense of Congress that the voluntary policies outlined in the Wireless Network Resiliency Cooperative Framework should be adhered to by all parties to aid consumers, 9-1-1 professionals, first responders, and local governments in accessing communication services during times of emergency. The framework is a voluntary initiative announced by wireless providers and the CTIA after receiving recommendations from government-private sector partnerships including the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC's) Communications Security, Reliability and Interoperability Council and the CTIA's Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Certification Program.

(Sec. 3) The bill requires the FCC to publish a study on the public safety benefits, technical feasibility, and cost of providing the public with emergency access to 9-1-1 services, when mobile service is unavailable during certain presidentially declared emergencies or major disasters or during gubernatorially declared emergencies, through:

- telecommunications service provider-owned WiFi access points and other communications technologies operating on unlicensed spectrum, without requiring any login credentials;
- non-telecommunications service provider-owned WiFi access points; and
- other alternative means.

The Government Accountability Office must report on: (1) how executive departments can better ensure that essential communications services remain operational during emergencies, (2) any legislative matters Congress could consider to help promote the resiliency of essential communications services, and (3) whether a nationwide directory of points of contact among providers of essential communications services is needed to facilitate the rapid restoration of such services damaged during times of emergency.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act is amended to expand the categories of essential communications service providers that may access a disaster site to restore and repair essential services in an emergency or major disaster without being denied or impeded by a federal agency. Services to be considered essential are wireline or mobile telephone service, Internet access service, radio or television broadcasting, cable service, or direct broadcast satellite service.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must encourage the adoption of mutual aid agreements recognizing the credentials of essential service providers issued by all parties to such an agreement.

At the direction of the President, federal agencies may provide assistance essential to meeting immediate threats to life and property resulting from a major disaster by allowing access to essential service providers for establishing temporary, or restoring, communications services.

Actions Timeline

- **Sep 12, 2017:** Received in the House.
- **Sep 12, 2017:** Message on Senate action sent to the House.
- **Sep 12, 2017:** Held at the desk.
- **Sep 11, 2017:** Passed/agreed to in Senate: Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent.(consideration: CR S5169-5170)
- **Sep 11, 2017:** Passed Senate with an amendment by Unanimous Consent. (consideration: CR S5169-5170)
- **Apr 5, 2017:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Thune with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. With written report No. 115-24.
- **Apr 5, 2017:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 31.
- **Jan 24, 2017:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **Jan 11, 2017:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jan 11, 2017:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.