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Driving Innovation and Growth in Internet Technology and Launching Universal Access to the Global Economy (DIGITAL AGE) Act of 2017

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Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: International Affairs

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Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations. (Feb 27, 2017)

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Sponsor

Name: Sen. Markey, Edward J. [D-MA]

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

Cosponsors

No cosponsors are listed for this bill.

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Foreign Relations Committee	Senate	Referred To	Feb 27, 2017

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

International Affairs

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

Driving Innovation and Growth in Internet Technology and Launching Universal Access to the Global Economy (DIGITAL AGE) Act of 2017

This bill requires the Department of State to designate to the U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy the additional role of Special Representative for the Global Connect Initiative to direct, and represent the United States internationally on, U.S. foreign policy efforts to promote global universal Internet access.

The Special Representative shall: (1) oversee the State Department's Global Connect initiative to enable first-time access to mobile and broadband Internet for at least 1.5 billion people in urban and rural areas by 2020, (2) promote investment by international finance institutions and U.S. corporations in Internet infrastructure expansion and connectivity projects, (3) encourage partner countries to adopt policies to lower prices and improve the quality of Internet service, and (4) collaborate with other federal agencies.

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) may support expanded Internet connectivity worldwide by: (1) taking part in State Department efforts to provide guidance to partner governments on establishing regulatory policies facilitating expanded Internet connectivity and information communications technology sectors in developing countries; (2) funding and implementing programs to expand Internet infrastructure, digital literacy, and Internet connectivity and usage in close coordination with the State Department; (3) building the capacity of developing countries to monitor and regulate the Internet sector and encourage private investment; and (4) integrating efforts to expand the availability of relevant local content across development sectors such as health programs.

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) should expedite institutional efforts and partner with other investors, private sector actors, and stakeholders to increase Internet access services. Investments must focus on expanding: (1) the number of people with new access to Internet services; (2) construction of fiber, mobile, and other emerging access technologies; (3) access in underserved and rural areas; and (4) investment priorities in sub-Saharan Africa and other regions with acute shortages of critical infrastructure.

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 is amended to: (1) allow OPIC to make loans for projects sponsored by, or significantly involving, U.S. investors or foreign associations with U.S. owners; (2) require systems infrastructure costs to be treated as transaction costs; and (3) extend until 2021 OPIC's authority to issue investment insurance, investment guarantees, and direct loans.

The President: (1) must incorporate into the strategic planning processes of the State Department and USAID a multiyear strategy encouraging developing countries to expand Internet access and information communications technology sectors of developing countries to catalyze innovation and economic growth, promote democracy, create educational opportunities, improve health outcomes, and strengthen global research networks; and (2) may establish an Interagency Working Group to coordinate U.S. government activities in carrying out the strategy.

Actions Timeline

- **Feb 27, 2017:** Introduced in Senate
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