

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3544

To require the Administrator of General Services to transfer certain surplus computers and technology equipment to nonprofit computer refurbishers for repair, distribution, and return, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 25, 2021

Ms. SPANBERGER (for herself, Mr. WITTMAN, and Mrs. LURIA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Oversight and Reform

A BILL

To require the Administrator of General Services to transfer certain surplus computers and technology equipment to nonprofit computer refurbishers for repair, distribution, and return, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Computers for Vet-
5 erans and Students Act of 2021” or the “COVS Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Access to computers and computer tech-
2 nology is indispensable for success in the 21st cen-
3 tury. Millions of Americans do not regularly use a
4 computer and research shows that substantial dis-
5 parities remain in both internet use and the quality
6 of access with the digital divide concentrated among
7 older, less educated, less affluent populations, espe-
8 cially veterans, low-income students, and senior citi-
9 zens.

10 (2) The COVID–19 pandemic has highlighted
11 the gap between those with computer access and
12 those without. Millions of students, their families,
13 and workers from across the economy were unable to
14 do schoolwork, work remotely from home, or be able
15 to connect to loved ones and their communities be-
16 cause of the digital divide.

17 (3) Any Federal program that distributes re-
18 tired Federal computers to a public school, an edu-
19 cational nonprofit, or a nonprofit computer refur-
20 bisher for repair and distribution would benefit from
21 a partnership with a nonprofit organization, whose
22 mission is bridging the digital divide.

1 **SEC. 3. REFURBISHMENT AND DISTRIBUTION OF SURPLUS**

2 **COMPUTERS AND TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT.**

3 (a) GSA TRANSFER.—On a quarterly basis, the Ad-
4 ministrator shall transfer to participating nonprofit com-
5 puter refurbishers surplus computer or technology equip-
6 ment that has been declared repairable as follows:

7 (1) 40 percent for repair and distribution in ac-
8 cordance with subsection (c)(1).

9 (2) 60 percent for repair and transfer in ac-
10 cordance with subsection (c)(2).

11 (b) PARTNERSHIP.—The Administrator may estab-
12 lish a partnership with private entities to—

13 (1) facilitate the identification of nonprofit com-
14 puter refurbishers and the distribution of surplus
15 computer or technology equipment under this sec-
16 tion; and

17 (2) facilitate the participation of nonprofit com-
18 puter refurbishers under this section.

19 (c) REPAIR AND DISTRIBUTION.—

20 (1) DISTRIBUTION TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DI-
21 VIDE.—A nonprofit computer refurbisher that re-
22 ceives equipment under subsection (a)(1) shall repair
23 and distribute such equipment to an educational in-
24 stitution, a veteran, an individual with a disability,
25 a low-income individual, a student, or a senior in
26 need that is residing or based in the United States.

1 (2) DISTRIBUTION TO STATE AGENCIES
2 THROUGH GSA.—A nonprofit computer refurbisher
3 that receives equipment under subsection (a)(2)
4 shall repair and return the equipment to the Admin-
5 istrator for transfer under section 549 of title 40,
6 United States Code.

7 (3) INABILITY TO BE REUSED.—A nonprofit
8 computer refurbisher shall transfer to the Adminis-
9 trator any equipment received under this subsection
10 that is not possible to repair for reclassification
11 under section 102–36.240 of title 41, Code of Fed-
12 eral Regulations.

13 (4) TRAINING PROGRAMS.—Any nonprofit com-
14 puter refurbisher that receives any equipment under
15 subsection (a)(1) shall offer training programs on
16 the use of computers and technology equipment for
17 any of the following:

18 (A) Educational institutions.

19 (B) Veterans.

20 (C) Individuals with disabilities.

21 (D) Low-income individuals.

22 (E) Students.

23 (F) Seniors.

24 (d) REPORTS REQUIRED.—Not later than 1 year
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and every 2

1 years thereafter for the next 4 years, the Administrator
2 shall submit to Congress a report on the efforts of the
3 Administrator under this Act.

4 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
6 trator” means the Administrator of General Serv-
7 ices.

8 (2) DIGITAL DIVIDE.—The term “digital di-
9 vide” means the gap between those who have an
10 internet-connected computer and the skills to use the
11 computer and those who do not. Principle barriers to
12 closing this gap include access to devices, afford-
13 ability, digital literacy, and access to broadband.

14 (3) EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—The term
15 “educational institution” means—

16 (A) any public or private child care center,
17 preschool, elementary school, secondary school,
18 accredited institution of vocational or profes-
19 sional education, or institution of higher edu-
20 cation; and

21 (B) in the case of an accredited institution
22 of vocational or professional education or an in-
23 stitution of higher education composed of more
24 than one school, college, or department that is

1 administratively a separate unit, each such
2 school, college, or department.

3 (4) FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “Federal
4 agency” has the meaning given the term “federal
5 agency” in section 102 of title 40, United States
6 Code.

7 (5) DISABILITY.—The term “disability” has the
8 meaning given that term in section 3 of the Ameri-
9 cans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C.
10 12102).

11 (6) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
12 term “institution of higher education” has the
13 meaning given that term in section 101 of the High-
14 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

15 (7) LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUALS.—The term “low
16 income individual” has the meaning given such term
17 in section 351 of the Small Business Investment Act
18 of 1958 (15 U.S.C. 689).

19 (8) NONPROFIT COMPUTER REFURBISHER.—
20 The term “nonprofit computer refurbisher” means a
21 nonprofit organization that primarily works to im-
22 prove access to information and communication
23 technology in their mission to bridge the digital di-
24 vide.

1 (9) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term
2 “nonprofit organization” means an organization that
3 is described under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal
4 Revenue Code of 1986 and is exempt from taxation
5 under section 501(a) of such Code.

6 (10) REPAIRABLE.—The term “repairable”
7 means property that is unusable but can be economi-
8 cally repaired.

9 (11) SECONDARY SCHOOL.—The term “sec-
10 ondary school” has the meaning given such term in
11 section 8101 of the Elementary and Secondary Edu-
12 cation Act of 1965.

13 (12) SENIOR.—The term “senior” means an in-
14 dividual who is 65 years of age or older.

15 (13) SENIOR IN NEED.—The term “senior in
16 need” means a senior who experiences cultural, so-
17 cial, or geographical isolation that—

18 (A) restricts the ability of the senior to
19 perform normal daily tasks; or

20 (B) threatens the capacity of the senior to
21 live independently.

22 (14) STUDENT.—The term “student” means
23 any individual enrolled in an educational institution,
24 but not a public or private child care center.

1 (15) SURPLUS COMPUTER OR TECHNOLOGY
2 EQUIPMENT.—The term “surplus computer or tech-
3 nology equipment” means computer or technology
4 equipment that is property as described under sec-
5 tion 549(b)(2) of title 40, United States Code.

6 (16) TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT.—The term
7 “technology equipment” means any physical asset
8 related to a computer or information technology, in-
9 cluding any peripheral component, tablet, commu-
10 nication device (such as a router, server, or cell
11 phone), printer, scanner, uninterruptible power
12 source, cable, or connection.

13 (17) VETERAN.—The term “veteran” has the
14 meaning given that term in section 101 of title 38,
15 United States Code.

16 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17 There are authorized to be appropriated such funds
18 as are necessary to carry out this Act.

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