



STATE OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

MEMORANDUM

To: Rep. Stephen Carr, Chair, Committee on Energy and Technology
From: Maria Royle, Legislative Counsel
Date: May 3, 2017
Subject: **H.347 - House and Senate Comparison**

H.347 as passed the Senate makes several changes to the House-passed version of the bill. The original language of H.347, however – concerning the survey requirement specific to development of the State Telecommunications Plan - remains unchanged.

The Senate included the provisions of H.216, concerning the Lifeline program, which passed the House.

The Senate did not propose any revisions to the statutory amendments to the Lifeline program proposed by the House.

The Senate did, however, make revisions to the reporting requirement specific to Lifeline eligibility and participation rates. See table below.

Sec. 2 of H.216 as passed the House	Sec. 3 of H.347 as passed the Senate
<p>Sec. 2. LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION; REPORT</p> <p><u>On or before January 1, 2019 and annually thereafter for the next three years, the Commissioner for Children and Families, in consultation with the Commissioner of Public Service, shall file a report with the General Assembly describing the eligibility and participation rates in Vermont with respect to both the federal and State Lifeline programs.</u></p>	<p>Sec. 3. LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION; REPORT</p> <p><u>On or before January 1, 2019 and annually thereafter for the next three years, the Commissioner for Children and Families, in consultation with the Commissioner of Public Service, shall file a report with the General Assembly describing the eligibility and participation rates in Vermont with respect to both the federal and State Lifeline programs. The first report shall include the number of persons 65 years of age or older who became ineligible for the federal and State Lifeline programs pursuant to the repeal of the State-specific eligibility criteria.</u></p>

In addition, the Senate added a requirement specific to DCF and DPS consumer outreach and education regarding changes to the Lifeline program. See below.

House	<p>Sec. 4 of H.347 as passed the Senate</p> <p>Sec. 4. CONSUMER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH; REPORT</p> <p><u>(a) On or before September 15, 2017, the Commissioner for Children and Families and the Commissioner of Public Service, with input and assistance from representatives of various advocacy groups, including AARP, Inc., shall prepare and distribute one or more notices for distribution to Vermonters, particularly persons 65 years of age or older, who are eligible to participate in the Lifeline program according to the Department for Children and Families' data. The notices shall describe the criteria for eligibility and the process necessary for such participation. With input and assistance from the same advocacy groups' representatives, the Commissioners shall engage, on or before October 31, 2017, in other education and outreach efforts designed to increase participation in the Lifeline program, with particular focus on eligibility through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In addition, education and outreach efforts shall be targeted to persons age 65 years or older who are eligible for the Lifeline program pursuant to the State-specific eligibility criteria that will be repealed effective November 1, 2017. Beginning on November 1, 2017, the Commissioners shall cooperate, to the extent necessary, with outreach efforts conducted by eligible telecommunications carriers and the FCC or its agent.</u></p> <p><u>(b) On or before September 15, 2017, the Commissioner for Children and Families, within input from the Commissioner of Public Service, shall file a report with the General Assembly describing the specific efforts made to identify persons age 65 or older who might be at risk of losing eligibility for Lifeline because of the elimination of State-specific eligibility criteria and to inform them of alternative means of obtaining Lifeline eligibility under the new federal criteria and summarizing the results of such outreach efforts.</u></p>
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