

Senate Bill No. 704

Passed the Senate September 12, 2019

Secretary of the Senate

Passed the Assembly September 10, 2019

Chief Clerk of the Assembly

This bill was received by the Governor this _____ day
of _____, 2019, at _____ o'clock ____M.

Private Secretary of the Governor

CHAPTER _____

An act to add Sections 871.6 and 871.8 to, to repeal Section 872 of, and to repeal and add Section 878 of, the Public Utilities Code, relating to telecommunications.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 704, Bradford. Telecommunications: Moore Universal Telephone Service Act.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including telephone corporations. The Moore Universal Telephone Service Act established the lifeline telephone service program in order to provide low-income households, as defined, with access to affordable basic residential telephone service. Existing law requires that a lifeline telephone service subscriber be provided with one lifeline subscription at the subscriber's principal place of residence, and provides that no other member of that subscriber's family or household who maintains residence at that place is eligible for lifeline telephone service.

This bill would revise the definition of "household" for these purposes and would authorize multiple lifeline telephone service subscribers to maintain the same address if they are not of the same household or if a subscriber meets one of certain requirements. The bill would require the commission, in a new or existing proceeding, to determine whether a lifeline telephone service subscriber shall be permitted an additional lifeline subscription for broadband services and would require the commission to issue a decision in the proceeding by no later than July 1, 2022. The bill would require the commission, by July 1, 2020, as part of an existing proceeding, to update the lifeline program to address certain issues. The bill would require the commission, by July 1, 2021, to adopt updated program rules for the lifeline program to, among other things, include various methods to increase participation of eligible low-income individuals in the lifeline program. The bill would require the commission, in consultation with relevant state agencies, to develop outreach and enrollment programs for the formerly incarcerated and for veterans. The bill

would require the commission to consider accepting alternative forms of identification to increase participation in the lifeline program by members of certain vulnerable or disadvantaged groups.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 871.6 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

871.6. The commission shall, in a new or existing proceeding, determine whether a lifeline telephone service subscriber shall be permitted an additional lifeline subscription for broadband services. The commission shall issue a decision in the proceeding by no later than July 1, 2022.

SEC. 2. Section 871.8 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

871.8. (a) By July 1, 2020, the commission shall, as part of an existing proceeding, update the program to address, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) Allowing subscribers to enroll directly online using an electronic signature.

(2) Allowing each lifeline subscriber to complete the subscriber's annual recertification of eligibility online using an electronic signature and verify their identity using personally identifiable information on file with the third-party administrator without using a commission-issued personal identification number (PIN).

(3) Allowing subscribers to recertify through an interactive voice response system.

(b) By July 1, 2021, the commission shall, as a part of an existing proceeding, adopt updated program rules that reflect program updates addressed pursuant to subdivision (a) and include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) Methods for increasing enrollment, participation, and renewal in the program by eligible low-income individuals commensurate with participation and renewal rates in other public purpose programs administered by the commission, such as the California Alternate Rates for Energy program. This shall include consideration, at minimum, of automatically enrolling eligible California Alternate Rates for Energy program or federal

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (42 U.S.C. Sec. 8621 et seq.) participants in the lifeline program and using information and data otherwise available to the commission to increase outreach.

(2) Methods for increasing the utilization of community-based or nonprofit organizations, as well as public agencies, to enroll subscribers in the lifeline program.

(3) Methods for increasing participation in the lifeline program by members of the vulnerable or disadvantaged groups identified in or pursuant to subdivision (d) of Section 878.

(4) Consideration of methods to increase enrollment and participation in the program by participants in the CalFresh program established pursuant to Chapter 10 (commencing with Section 18900) of Part 6 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code or the Medi-Cal program pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 14000) of Part 3 of Division 9 of the Welfare and Institutions Code. The commission shall consult with the State Department of Social Services and the State Department of Health Care Services for that purpose.

(5) Consideration of methods to phase out the use of noncarrier, nongovernmental-contractor, for-profit third-party originators to enroll subscribers.

(c) The commission shall do all of the following:

(1) Develop, in consultation with the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, an outreach and enrollment program for the formerly incarcerated as a part of the department's reentry services.

(2) Develop, in consultation with the Department of Veterans Affairs, an outreach and enrollment program for veterans.

(d) The commission shall accept, for enrollment purposes, identification issued to eligible inmates released from state prisons pursuant to subdivision (a) of Section 3007.05 of the Penal Code and identification issued to eligible juvenile offenders released from a state juvenile facility pursuant to Section 3007.08 of the Penal Code.

(e) In addition to any other proof of identification required for enrollment in the lifeline program, the commission shall consider accepting, for enrollment purposes, alternative forms of identification to increase participation in the lifeline program by members of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups identified in, or pursuant to, subdivision (d) of Section 878.

(f) The commission may establish enrollment criteria to increase participation by formerly incarcerated individuals that reflect the distinct challenges they encounter upon release from a juvenile facility, state prison, or other such facility.

SEC. 3. Section 872 of the Public Utilities Code is repealed.

SEC. 4. Section 878 of the Public Utilities Code is repealed.

SEC. 5. Section 878 is added to the Public Utilities Code, to read:

878. (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “Adult” means any person 18 years of age or older.

(2) “Economic unit” means all adult individuals contributing to and sharing in the income and expenses of a household.

(3) “Household” means any group of individuals, including the subscriber, who are living together at the same address and as one economic unit. A household may include related and unrelated persons. If an adult has no, or minimal, income and lives with someone who provides financial support to that adult, both persons shall be part of the same household. A child under 18 years of age and living with a parent or guardian shall be part of the same household as the parent or guardian.

(b) A lifeline telephone service subscriber shall be provided with one lifeline subscription, as defined by the commission, per household and, except as provided in subdivision (d), no other member of that household is eligible for lifeline telephone service. A lifeline telephone service subscriber is eligible for lifeline service at only one address.

(c) Multiple lifeline telephone service subscribers may maintain the same address if they are not of the same household.

(d) (1) Notwithstanding subdivision (b), a lifeline telephone service subscriber who is any of the following shall be provided with one lifeline subscription, as defined by the commission, which shall, if applicable, be in addition to and not counted as the lifeline subscription available to the subscriber’s household pursuant to this section:

(A) A foster youth.

(B) Formerly incarcerated.

(C) A Native American.

(D) A veteran.

(E) Deaf.

(F) Disabled.

(G) A member of another vulnerable or disadvantaged group commonly presenting complex guardianship or household compositions that would benefit from inclusion in the lifeline program, as determined by the commission.

(2) The commission may establish reasonable qualifications for a subscription provided pursuant to this subdivision.

Approved _____, 2019

Governor