



## **HB 97/SB 66– Digital Connectivity Act of 2021**

### **Testimony before Senate Economics Matters Committee**

**February 9, 2021**

**Position: Favorable**

Mr. Chair, Mr. Vice Chair and members of the committee, my name is Michael Loll, and I represent the 700+ members of Indivisible Howard County. We are providing written testimony today in **strong support of SB 66** to ensure all Maryland residents have access to high quality affordable broadband internet service.

According to [BroadbandNow](#), Maryland ranks third in the nation in terms of broadband access. Despite this high ranking, 201,000 of our residents do not have high speed (25 mbps) broadband, and another 130,000 lack any kind of wired internet connection. Many of these residents are concentrated on the Eastern shore and in the western part of the state, but there are poorer communities scattered throughout Maryland that either lack access to or can not afford service. About 65% of our residents can obtain low cost internet, far better than the national average, but this means 35% of the state's population does not have this option. Broadband access delivers educational opportunities, and those without it are unable to explore those opportunities. Businesses, especially small ones, rely on digital broadband access for advertising, customer contact, delivery, inventory management, and a host of other activities. Areas without this kind of service are at a severe economic disadvantage. We ask you to pass this bill to better educate our populace and to widen the scope of economic opportunity in Maryland.

**We encourage a favorable report.**

Michael Loll  
Columbia, MD