

Reps. Shulman, Daniels, Stallworth, Smith, Cheeks, Waters and Bradstreet offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 203.

A resolution to urge the Congress of the United States and the Michigan Department of Education to take certain actions to ensure the integrity and success of the E-Rate program to bring technology to all school districts.

Whereas, The education of our nation's youth continues to be a top priority at all levels of government. In one of many efforts to advance the education of our nation's youth, Congress enacted the E-Rate program, officially known as the Universal Service Program Schools and Libraries Support Mechanism, as part of the 1996 Telecommunications Act; and

Whereas, The purpose of the E-Rate program is to provide our nation's neediest school districts and libraries with the necessary funding to develop and expand their technological infrastructure by procuring internet access, internal network connections, and other telecommunications services. This allows school districts and libraries to reallocate some of their funds to other necessary and essential programs; and

Whereas, The E-Rate program is a ratepayer-funded initiative made possible by fees paid by telecommunications companies that then pass these costs on to their customers; and

Whereas, It has recently been discovered that a major telecommunications provider and participant in the E-Rate program may have violated specific provisions of the program by amassing over \$5 million worth of telecommunications material and equipment intended to be used to enhance technology in the Chicago Public Schools. In this case, the materials and equipment were reportedly never delivered or installed in the schools for which they were intended. This has resulted in a loss to both the taxpayers and to the children this telecommunications material and equipment were intended to help. The United States House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee has begun an investigation into these alleged improprieties; and

Whereas, School districts and libraries in the state of Michigan also participate in the E-Rate program, having received a total of \$30.8 million in Fiscal Year 2003. In an effort to bolster the education of our state's youth and build upon the commendable purpose of the E-Rate program, the Michigan Legislature is committed to putting forth the effort necessary to help our school districts implement competitive technical programs; and

Whereas, As a result of the recent economic recession, it is now, more than ever, imperative that all of levels of government continue to seek ways to maximize efficiencies while reducing costs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we express our support for the United States House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee's efforts to restore the integrity of the E-Rate program by uncovering any possible abuse or misappropriation of funds, or any failure to adhere to the guidelines of the program by any of the parties involved. We urge the committee to proceed with the utmost diligence and expediency in its investigation of this matter; and be it further

Resolved, That we request the Michigan State Board of Education and the Michigan Department of Education to investigate Michigan's involvement in the E-Rate program to ensure that these funds are being utilized for their intended purpose and that Michigan's children are receiving the equipment and benefits for which these funds were allocated; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Michigan State Board of Education, the Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the members of the United States House of Representatives Energy