



Pennsylvania AFL-CIO

Oppose Telephone Deregulation

Deregulation to Higher Rates for Telephone Service

The bill would immediately remove all regulation of basic voice telephone service in cities and towns throughout Pennsylvania. In rural areas, it would remove all regulation of basic telephone service in areas served by at least two other providers, such as a cable company, wireless carrier, or Skype.

Abandon Rural Communities

Today, the local telephone company must serve all customers. This bill would allow the local telephone company to abandon this obligation, beginning in 2018. Customers in rural communities could be left with no affordable voice service or even no voice service at all.

Eliminate Consumer Protections and Quality of Service

This bill would eliminate Public Utility Commission (PUC) oversight over consumer complaints and consumer protections. Consumers would have nowhere to go if their local telephone company did not provide accurate bills, timely repair of service, or comply with terms of service. The bill would also eliminate all service quality standards. The local telephone company would no longer be held accountable for timely repairs, installation, and answer of calls.

Leave Rural Pennsylvania and Small Cities on the Wrong Side of the Digital Divide

Verizon has refused to build its state-of-the-art FiOS fiber network outside of the Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and Harrisburg metro areas. With this bill, Verizon can abandon its wireline network in the rest of Pennsylvania. In five years, it can stop serving customers it doesn't want to serve. In the meantime, the bill allows Verizon to substitute wireless for wireline service. Wireless service costs more, provides no back-up power during weather emergencies, and does not provide affordable high-speed internet connections.

Pennsylvania needs high-speed internet and affordable, quality service for all. Telephone deregulation is a huge step backwards for consumers, communities, and businesses.

Prepared by the Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Legislative Department

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