



February 25, 2013

(Via e-mail)

The Honorable Peter Cownie, Chairman
Committee on Commerce
Iowa Legislature
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

RE: House Study Bill 170 (HSB 170)

Dear Chairman Cownie:

The Voice on the Net (VON) Coalition¹, which represents the nation's leading technology companies including Google, Microsoft, AT&T, Yahoo! and Vonage, writes to express its support for the passage of HSB 170. In particular, we appreciate the proposal to ensure that Voice over Internet Protocol services and Internet Protocol-enabled services are not subject to state regulation.

IP communications can be a force for increased competition, a platform for innovation, a driver for broadband deployment and a vehicle for continued economic growth. In fact, with the right policies, IP communications competition can save Iowa consumers millions of dollars annually – putting real money back into consumers' pockets when they really need it. Further, by harnessing IP communications as a broadband driver (since, for example, VoIP calls are carried over broadband connections), increased broadband adoption in Iowa will create jobs as the country works its way out of these difficult economic times.

To help ensure that Iowa consumers can benefit from these transformative Internet Protocol enabled services, HSB 170 clarifies that Internet Protocol-enabled services are not subject to state regulation. The bill maintains the status quo regarding other statutory provisions, including any currently applicable fees or assessments that may apply to VoIP or Internet Protocol enabled services, and consumer protection laws that apply generally to the conduct of business in Iowa.

By adopting these provisions, Iowa would join policymakers in 25 states that have recognized that to unleash the vast benefits that Internet Protocol enabled services can deliver; the service should not be subject to a potential patchwork of conflicting state regulatory models. These provisions are particularly important for consumers living in rural Iowa who may not yet enjoy the benefits of broadband and voice competition.

¹The Voice on the Net or VON Coalition consists of leading VoIP companies, on the cutting edge of developing and delivering voice innovations over the Internet. The coalition works to advance regulatory policies that enable Americans to take advantage of the full promise and potential of VoIP. The Coalition believes that with the right public policies, Internet based voice advances can make talking more affordable, businesses more productive, jobs more plentiful, the Internet more valuable, and Americans more safe and secure. Since its inception, the VON Coalition has promoted pragmatic policy choices for unleashing VoIP's potential. <http://www.von.org>



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Government leaders in states like Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri and Texas have all taken steps to prevent state regulation of IP communications in order to boost broadband deployment and make communications services more affordable. We encourage you to follow suit and push for the passage of HSB 170.

Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

The VON Coalition

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