



Get the real facts about HB 6402, landline telephone deregulation

AT&T claims: there is not a single portion of the bill that would allow or cause prices to increase and the new services that this bill encourages are generally less expensive and better than old services.

The bill makes no changes to non-competitive local exchange or POTS service.

Any senior that wants a traditional phone will still be able to get one.

AARP facts: Because POTS (plain old telephone) service is offered to most customers as part of a “competitive” package which could include Caller ID or long distance for example, AT&T can price the package however it likes. Furthermore, if HB 6402 passes, the state’s service quality standards would no longer apply. AT&T’s own testimony before the Energy and Technology Committee states that they do not want to have to maintain 2 networks. What they want to concentrate on its digital and not the copper wire network.

Technically, AT&T could say it is not abandoning its copper network but for all practical purposes, AT&T could, with no recourse, discontinue POTS services. It is possible to “abandon” a network through price increases and service degradation without technically “abandoning” that service.

AT&T claims: medical devices work on VOIP and wireless networks and device manufacturers are increasingly making devices for new technology because they can do more for their customers.

AARP facts: Not all seniors can afford VOIP technology from their cable company. Telephone service from cable companies is only offered as a part of expensive bundles with high-speed internet and cable television packages. Cell phone coverage is not available or reliable in all parts of Connecticut, particularly rural areas. Additionally, 9-1-1 services do not pinpoint a cell phone user instantly like a traditional landline. AT&T even acknowledges that not all medical devices work with wireless technology. Most seniors would not be able to afford unnecessary upgrades to medical devices that do.

AT&T claims: the bill does nothing more than eliminate outdated automatic and redundant “Ma Bell” era audit requirements where such audits are already required under federal law.

AARP facts: HB 6402 would stop the PURA from requiring an annual state specific audit of AT&T’s business in Connecticut. Without an annual state specific audit of AT&T’s operations in Connecticut we will have no way of having comparative year to year data of how much of the customers money they are investing in telecommunications networks in Connecticut versus the profits being sent back to its headquarters in Texas.

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