



**STATEMENT OF AT&T CONNECTICUT
John Emra, Regional Vice President**

**Regarding Raised House Bill No. 6401
AN ACT CONCERNING VIDEO AND CABLE PROVIDERS
Before the Committee on Energy and Technology
February 21, 2013**

Proposal:

The bill would establish by statute existing PURA (Public Utilities Regulatory Authority) practice with respect to regulation of VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) services.

Comments:

AT&T supports Raised House Bill No. 6401, thanks the Committee for introducing the legislation, and urges its adoption though in a somewhat amended form in order to address continuing changes to technology.

The Raised Bill sets in statute existing PURA practice and precedent with respect to regulation of VoIP. In passing this legislation, the General Assembly will provide regulatory certainty to the communications industry which is important as companies consider where and to what level it will invest in states. At the same time, the legislation is not removing any regulatory oversight in practice today while making clear that important consumer protections apply to such services.

The PURA has long held that it is preempted from regulating VoIP services by virtue of federal law and FCC orders. The language in the bill merely codifies existing practice and regulatory authority of the PURA. The language does make clear that Connecticut's Unfair Trade Practices Act, other consumer protection laws, 911, and lifeline rules do apply to such services and providers.

Twenty-four other states and the District of Columbia have already adopted language similar to that found in the Raised Bill including neighboring Rhode Island and Massachusetts. The state of California adopted a bill last fall.

We would strongly suggest that the Committee make minor changes to the legislation to ensure that it is applicable to "IP-Enabled" communications services, not just VoIP. Doing so will ensure that the legislation is not so narrowly drawn as to become nearly obsolete upon passage. The majority of the jurisdictions which have considered and passed similar laws have used the more encompassing and modern definitions as we are suggesting here, including more recent vintages passed in California and New Hampshire, for example.

We would be happy to provide the Committee with such language changes in marked-up form for your consideration.

Conclusion:

AT&T thanks the Committee for raising Raised House Bill No. 6401 and urges its adoption in a slightly amended form.