



**Communications  
Workers of America**

**The Connecticut Union  
of  
Telephone Workers, Inc.**



AFL-CIO

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***Testimony of William F. Henderson, III***

President, Local 1298

***Communications Workers of America***

***Energy and Technology Committee***

***March 4, 2014***

**HB 5413 – ACT CONCERNING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE**

Senator Duff, Representative Reed, members of the Energy and Technology Committee: my name is William F. Henderson III, and I am proud to serve as the President of the Communications workers of America Local 1298, representing all of those telecommunication workers at AT&T in our great state of Connecticut and all of the AT&T wireless workers in New England.

I am here to speak in regards to HB 5413 – AN ACT CONCERNING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICE.

As I have testified to this legislative committee for the last three years, and specifically on this same legislation, when it was HB 6402 last year, and SB 447 the year before that . I now consider myself an expert on this very legislation, however, with one exception, in the past I have opposed this legislative approach. Today, I am here to encourage a study to modernize the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes . We have seen many changes in the last year as it applies to the telecom industry in Connecticut, and how it applies to Connecticut telephone users. We have witnessed the Federal Communications Commission struggle with where ***the oversight should be***, as it applies to VOIP ( or Voice Over Internet Protocol), and asking that states perform trials to better determine how this new 21<sup>st</sup> century POTS (or Plain Old Telephone System) should be regulated to reflect the advent of an increased reliance on telephone communications, and recognizing the fact that wireless is only wireless

until it reaches a cell tower and is then connected through wires. We should engage the FCC in performing this study.

This legislature should also be concerned with the public's right to the secrecy of communications and updating legislation that guarantees the public's right to confidentiality when using their phone and limiting their exposure to identity fraud, which has been so prevalent and in the news over the last few weeks. Our legislature should be the first in the country to pass legislation dealing with the **TELEPHONE CONSUMERS BILL OF RIGHTS**, looking at such items as:

- Minimum staffing and service levels to better deal with network interruptions.
- Re-establishment of network maintenance programs to ensure reasonable timetable for restoration of service.
- Rate increases must be presented in an open forum to allow public input.
- All jobs outsourced out of the state of Connecticut should not receive any tax breaks or benefit from its taxpayers.
- The public should have the right to request a service representative in the state of Connecticut if requested.

This is, to mention only a few, of the areas that deserve protective legislation that should be brought forth by this committee.

In conclusion, this legislative committee should hold hearings on the proposed sale of AT&T wireline services in the State of Connecticut to Frontier Communication. This is a major undertaking with unparalleled consequences if not properly vetted to answer everyone's concerns prior to the sale.

I would like to thank this committee for the opportunity this afternoon to deliver my testimony on behalf of all the telephone workers in Connecticut and would welcome any questions that you may have in regard to it.