



Testimony of

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Energy & Technology Committee
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HB 6442 An Act Concerning Equitable Access to Broadband

SB 4 An Act Concerning Data Privacy, Net Neutrality, Cyber Security and Fairness in the New Age of a Digital Workforce

Good morning Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti and members of the Energy & Technology Committee. My name is Sal Luciano, and I am proud to serve as the President of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, a federation of hundreds of local unions representing more than 220,000 members in the private sector, public sector and building trades. Our members live and work in every city and town in our state, reflecting the diversity that makes Connecticut great. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

The Connecticut AFL-CIO and the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 1298 support the expansion of highspeed Internet in Connecticut. If done correctly, such investment would benefit schools and underserved communities while enhancing economic development efforts. We are concerned however with the two proposals before you today, Governor Lamont's HB 6442 and the Committee's SB 4 would cost jobs and undermine safety.

Both bills require PURA to develop a "One Touch Make Ready" process to be implemented by utility pole owners. "One Touch, Make Ready" (OTMR) allows companies (and their approved contractors) that want to put new equipment on utility poles to move existing equipment to create the necessary space. This is called "make-ready" work. In August 2018, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) adopted OTMR as nationwide policy but gave states the right to determine their own approach. Connecticut reserved the right to regulate make-ready work.

CWA-represented employees at Frontier have moved Frontier equipment on poles for decades, ensuring the safety and quality of the make-ready work. We cannot support legislation that eliminates the make-ready work performed by highly skilled members of CWA Local 1298. Such efforts would not just put their jobs at risk, but it would compromise public safety.

Make-ready pole attachment work is complex and, if done incorrectly, can lead to dangerous conditions for workers and the public. Unskilled work could leave heavy terminals and wires hanging without proper support. Ungrounded wires could pose electrocution risks. Incorrect placement or overloading equipment on damaged or decaying poles could lead to poles falling in the public right-of-way. Skilled, professionally trained workers who know the equipment, the condition of the poles, and safe practices can best protect public and worker safety.

Career company employees are in the best position to perform make-ready work safely and properly; they know the equipment, the condition of the poles, the rules regulating attachment placement, and have been professionally trained. Moreover, career workers are on the frontlines of the telecommunications industry – responding to consumer needs, building and maintaining networks, ensuring safety and quality service. Mandating contractors to do make-ready work undermines good, career jobs in communities across the state.

We urge the Committee to work with CWA Local 1298 to develop legislation that expands broadband access safely and protects the jobs of highly skilled professionals already working in the industry. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.