

Testimony in Support of HB 1608, "The Telecommunications Market Competition Legislation"  
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DE

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I would like to take this opportunity to express the African-American Chamber of Commerce's of PA, NJ and DE support for HB 1608, Telecommunications Market Competition Legislation. Our organization and its members hope the Consumer Affairs Committee will endorse this legislation and bring it to the full House for a vote before the end of this year.

Updates to the state's telecommunications rules are long overdue. Consumers and businesses in the 21st century cannot function properly utilizing 20th century technology. Similarly, communications providers cannot continue to innovate and invest in new products and services if they are burdened by bureaucratic red tape designed for a monopoly era.

Our member companies need access to cutting edge communications technologies to successfully run their businesses and deliver for their customers. We have all benefitted from the dramatic changes that have taken place in the telecommunications sector over the last ten years thanks to competition. Better prices, products and services have helped our businesses grow. We are all eager to see what will come next from this industry, but recognize that it will be difficult for traditional phone companies to continue making critical contributions to the industry if they are forced to focus on bureaucrats rather than customers.

Simplifying rules will allow telecommunications companies to compete on a level playing field with their unregulated competitors, and that's important in ensuring competition in the market continues.

Twenty six states, including Delaware, have taken steps to remove outdated telecom regulations and Pennsylvania should follow to ensure our communications infrastructure remains top-notch. It will be difficult for our state to compete on a global scale if we block opportunities that attract investments in new networks. If that happens, our economy will suffer and so will our state's small businesses.

HB 1608 represents one way Pennsylvania can improve the business climate and promote economic growth. Companies both large and small need continued access to innovative communications platforms. HB 1608 will ensure that happens.

Thank you for consideration of our Chamber's views. We appreciate all you do to make Pennsylvania a great place to operate a business.