



The VON Coalition

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VoIP Leaders Applaud New Law Unlocking Future 9-1-1 Capabilities

BACKGROUND: Today, President Bush signed into law the "New and Emerging Technologies 911 Improvement Act of 2008" (H.R. 3403.) The legislation will help accelerate VoIP 911 solutions by providing direct access to the 9-1-1 network, enabling equivalent liability relief for call-takers, and requiring the creation of a national plan for a next generation 9-1-1 system that uses VoIP to provide breakthrough advances in emergency communications.

The following statement can be attributed to Caitlin Clark-Zigmond, President of the VON Coalition.

"This is a huge step forward for public safety, broadband users, and innovators alike. Enabling consumers to take advantage of transformative technologies like VoIP and answering the call for the modernization of our 911 network will help ensure that all Americans will be more safe and secure in an emergency.

Dialing 911 can be the most important call a person ever makes. That is why VoIP providers have made providing 911 emergency service in an Internet world a paramount priority. Interconnected VoIP providers have gone to extraordinary lengths to make astonishing progress under a very ambitious timetable. We are proud that Interconnected VoIP services now provide E911 to more than 97 percent of their subscribers -- the fastest and broadest onetime implementation of E911 in the history of public safety. And America is safer for it. As a result of this unprecedented effort, Americans who dial 911 using interconnected VoIP services can now rest assured they can reach help in an emergency. It is a particularly remarkable achievement considering that no underlying network connectivity provider can yet offer VoIP providers the ability to connect to all selective routers nationwide.

This legislation is important public safety legislation. Critically, this bill:

- *Gives public safety, interconnected VoIP providers and others involved in handling 911 calls the same liability protections when handling 911 calls from interconnected VoIP users as from mobile or wired telephone service users.*
- *Gives interconnected VoIP providers access to the same tools for implementing 911 and E911 as mobile service providers, on the same rates, terms and conditions. This ensures that 911 component suppliers receive a fair price, including a reasonable profit, but precludes profiteering on components for interconnected VoIP 911 services or use of critical 911 components as a tool to delay competition from interconnected VoIP.*
- *Advances the development of next generation IP-based 911 systems, so that we can have a 911 system that uses 21st century VoIP technology, not network technology from the 1960s.*
- *Precludes the FCC from creating a technology-specific 911 and E911 mandate.*
- *By utilizing the FCC's definition of interconnected VoIP services, maintains the focus of 911 and E911 obligations on those services that are telephone replacement services.*

These are critical steps forward for accelerating life-saving E911 solutions across the country and for enabling consumers to take advantage of transformative technologies like VoIP throughout the country.

About the VON Coalition:

The Voice on the Net or VON Coalition consists of leading VoIP companies, on the cutting edge of developing and delivering voice innovations over Internet. The coalition, which includes AT&T, BT Americas, CallSmart, Cisco, CommPartners, Covad, EarthLink, Google, iBasis, i3 Voice and Data, Intel, Microsoft, New Global Telecom, PointOne, Pulver.com, Skype, T-Mobile USA, USA Datanet, and Yahoo! works to advance regulatory policies that enable Americans to take advantage of the full promise and potential of VoIP. The Coalition believes that with the right public policies, Internet based voice advances can make talking more affordable, businesses more productive, jobs more plentiful, the Internet more valuable, and Americans more safe and secure. Since its inception, the VON Coalition has promoted pragmatic policy choices for unleashing VoIP's potential. More information about the VON Coalition can be obtained at the following website: <http://www.von.org>