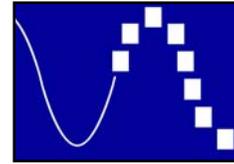


February 22, 2010



The VON Coalition

The Honorable Karen E. Spilka  
The Honorable Brian S. Dempsey  
Members of the Joint Committee on Economic Development  
& Emerging Technologies  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senators Spilka and Dempsey:

The Voice on the Net (VON) Coalition, which represents the nation's leading companies developing and delivering voice innovations over the Internet, respectfully submits these comments concerning SB 2270, an Act Promoting Economic Development Through the Commonwealth, which would in Section 70, amend Chapter 25C of the General Laws, by adding a new Section 6A. Specifically, in order to ensure that consumers can take full advantage of the power and potential that Internet communications can deliver, VON supports the prohibition on the regulation of Voice over Internet Protocol ("VoIP") service.<sup>1</sup> With this new law, Massachusetts consumers will benefit from the lower prices and robust services promised by Internet Protocol communications technologies, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts will benefit from additional investment in the broadband infrastructure that is necessary to deliver these innovative products and services.

VoIP can be a force for increased competition, a platform for innovation, a driver for broadband deployment and a vehicle for continued economic growth. In fact, with the right policies, VoIP competition can save Massachusetts consumers millions of dollars annually – putting real money back into consumers' pockets when they really need it. Further, by harnessing VoIP as a broadband driver (since VoIP calls are carried over broadband connections), increased broadband adoption in Massachusetts will create jobs as the country works its way out of these difficult economic times.

To help ensure that Massachusetts consumers can benefit from these transformative Internet services, new Section 6A of Chapter 25C of the General Laws would prohibit regulation of VoIP services. By adopting this provision, Massachusetts would join policymakers at both the federal and state level that have recognized that to unleash the vast benefits that VoIP can deliver, the service should not be subject to a potential patchwork of conflicting state regulatory models. The provision is particularly important for consumers living in rural Massachusetts who have yet to enjoy the benefits of broadband and voice competition.

Rather than adopting state-specific rules for VoIP, government leaders in states like California, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, New Jersey and Virginia have all taken steps to prevent state regulation of VoIP in order to boost broadband deployment, make phone service

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<sup>1</sup> These comments are limited to the language in SB 2270 as it applies to VoIP service; VON is not taking a position on the section as it relates to Internet Protocol-enabled service.

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more affordable, and harness VoIP's vast potential for important public policy goals. We encourage you to follow suit and adopt the section in SB 2270 prohibiting state regulation of VoIP service.

Sincerely,

**The VON Coalition**

/s/

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**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 the Internet. The coalition, which includes AT&T, Cisco, Google, iBasis, Microsoft, New Global Telecom, Skype, T-Mobile USA, Vonage 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. <http://www.von.org>