



April 26, 2012

(By email)
The Honorable Christopher G. Donovan
Speaker of the House
Legislative Office Building, Room 4100
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

RE: SB 447

Dear House Speaker Donovan:

The Voice on the Net (VON) Coalition¹, which represents the nation's leading companies developing and delivering voice innovations over the Internet, writes to express its support for SB 447, as amended. In particular, we welcome the proposal to ensure that interconnected voice over Internet protocol service, or interconnected VoIP, is not subject to any state regulation concerning the entry, rates, terms or conditions of service.

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 can save Connecticut consumers millions of dollars annually – putting real money back into consumers' pockets when they really need it. Further, by harnessing VoIP communications as a broadband driver, increased broadband adoption in Connecticut will create jobs as the country works its way out of these difficult economic times.

To help ensure that Connecticut consumers can benefit from these transformative Internet-based communications services, Sec. 7(a) adds a definition of interconnected VoIP service, and Sec. 7(b) states that no department, authority, agency, commission or political subdivision of the state shall adopt, enact or enforce any laws that would effectively regulate the service. By adopting these provisions, Connecticut would join federal policymakers and more than 24 states 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. These provisions are particularly important for consumers living in rural Connecticut who may not yet enjoy the benefits of broadband and voice competition.

Rather than adopting state-specific rules for VoIP, government leaders in states like Florida, Georgia, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, Texas, Utah, Virginia and Wisconsin have all taken steps to prevent state regulation of IP communications in order to boost broadband deployment, make phone service more affordable, and harness IP communications vast potential for important public policy goals. We encourage you to follow suit and continue to push for the passage of SB 447.

¹The 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, Broadvox, BT, Cloud Communications Alliance, Google, iBasis, Microsoft, Nextiva, Skype, 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>



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Please contact the undersigned if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

The VON Coalition

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