



Testimony in Support of HB2701
House Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee
John J. Federico
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My name is John Federico and I serve as the President of the Kansas Cable Telecommunications Association. KCTA members provide advanced telecommunication services including video, voice and broadband to both urban and rural communities across Kansas. I appear in support of HB2701.

BROADBAND IN KANSAS

Cable providers deploy more broadband services to Kansas homes and businesses than anyone else in Kansas. In our conversations with legislators across the state this Summer and Fall, it seems that concerns about inadequate broadband in different areas of Kansas has reached a crescendo. And it's the reason I believe it is time to move forward with a serious plan for Kansas to expand broadband in areas of the state that are currently unserved or underserved. According to information contained in the FCC's Annual Broadband Progress Report, the national average of the population without access to broadband (defined as 25Mbps down / 3Mbps up) is 10%. In Kansas, the average is 15%. And according to the FCC, the lack of access to suitable broadband is not just a "rural" problem, as 5% of the population in urban areas in KS are without options (versus 4% nationally).

WHY NOW?

As many as 7 years ago, the FCC set out to comprehensively reform and modernize the federal universal service system and implemented the Connect America Fund. And here in Kansas, there seems to be more focus than ever on getting broadband into the unserved areas of the state. In support of the formation of a Broadband Task Force, HB2701 provides the opportunity for policymakers, providers and various stakeholders to work together to create a path for real reforms in Kansas. I respectfully ask that you consider the following factors:

- A changing world of global e-commerce
- Educational necessity
- More options/better technology
- FCC's Broadband Initiative and a likely DC infrastructure program
- Collection of "best practices" from other established statewide broadband initiatives
- A two-decades old Kansas Universal Service Fund program
- The continued loss of landline telephone customers (cord cutting)
- Reforms, years ago, of the Federal universal service program (CAF I & CAF II)

THE FRAMEWORK of HB2701

The make-up of the Task Force has good balance. The Mission of the statewide Task Force is appropriate to move the state forward with the semblance of a plan for the 2019 Legislature to consider. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of maintaining a laser focus on unserved areas of the state as a priority. The bill makes no mention of, nor should it, of redirecting any of the KUSF dollars.

I would ask for your favorable consideration of advancing HB2701. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before your Committee Mr. Chairman and am happy to answer any questions.