

DID YOU KNOW? Corporations VOTED to adopt this. Through ALEC, global companies work as “equals” in “unison” with politicians to write laws to govern your life. Big Business has “a VOICE and a VOTE,” according to newly exposed documents. **DO YOU?**

ALEC TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEREGULATION POLICY STATEMENT

WHEREAS, it is the mission of ALEC to advance Jeffersonian principles of free markets, limited government, federalism and individual liberty, and

WHEREAS, in recent years, changes in telecommunications and information technology have revolutionized the way we live and work. With each new year, consumers are able to communicate and conduct business faster at lower cost and more productively, with virtually anyone in the world, and

WHEREAS, until recently, federal and state governments, in the spirit of bipartisanship, have trended toward less regulation of wireline, wireless, cable and the Internet. Lifting price controls and easing barriers to entry have resulted in a competitive marketplace where consumers have far more choice and control over their telecommunications services, and

WHEREAS, these changes have incented the nation's 1,360 facilities-based broadband service providers to invest approximately \$60 billion in modern communications networks in 2007 and, through 2011, annual capital spending will be in the \$60 billion to \$70 billion range.^[1]

WHEREAS, many states still continue to regulate landline service as if it were still a monopoly. These regulations focus on what certain companies can or cannot do, restricting free market principles to the detriment of consumers.

WHEREAS, despite these obvious and measurable benefits of deregulation and competition, more lawmakers and regulators are urging greater government regulation and oversight of broadband telecommunications networks, Internet applications, Internet content and Internet-based business models.

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED,

The state and federal regulatory framework should incorporate the following tenets in order to accomplish these goals:

- **Telecommunications Pricing Freedom** – Competition is driving down prices, boosting innovation and improving service. States need to weed out examples of old rules that focus on what companies can and cannot do and allow the companies to deliver what is best for consumers. Policymakers have made great strides in updating laws to eliminating barriers to providing the best products at the best prices to the most customers. States should also resist calls to pass laws that would regulate the pricing, the quality of service or the technology that service providers can use to manage Internet traffic as it crosses their networks.
- **Market Freedom for Alternative Technologies** – The historic hands-off approach to wireless, broadband and VoIP regulation has benefited consumers. Because the markets in which these services are provided are competitive, the status quo, the absence of cumbersome state regulation, should be preserved.
- **Universal Service** – While different states use different USF models, overall market-based solutions should be encouraged. Explicit USF funding should be limited to targeted, high-cost areas in support of the long-held public policy goal of universal availability of communications services. Local government provision of wholesale or retail telecom, cable TV, Internet or other broadband services in competition with existing private sector providers should be prohibited.

- **End of Discriminatory Taxation** - Telecommunications is a vital service. The application of excise taxes, government surcharges and special fees raises the price of service and acts as a barrier to adoption. States should resist using telecommunications service as an easy tax target and look at ways to reduce the high tax burden on telecom users.
- **Judiciously Conservative Application of Antitrust Law** - In spite of regulators and Washington's differing interpretations of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, and overwhelmingly litigious environment, and in some instances the application of antitrust laws which further dampen competition and delay technological innovation, it remains ALEC policy that free market principles must prevail. Business should expect a competitive environment unburdened by indiscriminate regulations and market uncertainty with minimal political involvement.
- **Video Franchise Reform** - Because intermodal competition involves packaging or bundling of video, Internet and telecommunications services over a single platform, it is important that states undertake efforts to remove barriers to entry or inequity of regulation among video competitors, foster additional consumer choices in the video marketplace and ultimately ensure competitive neutrality.
- **Protection of Internet Service Providers** - Interactive Access Providers and Interactive Computer Services should not be held civilly or criminally liable for content they either host or transmit. Nor should they be compelled to monitor third-party data for illegal content, nor be compelled to provide any private client information data, without due process.
- **Protection of Web Publishers, Content Providers and Social Networking Hosts** - First Amendment rights, without exception, extend to all speech and expression on the Internet.
- **Procurement Choice for Government IT Departments** - The market for information technology services is robust and competitive, and state governments are coveted as major customers. States should allow their IT directors full freedom to choose from the vast variety IT companies, solutions, platforms and technologies available, so as to provide the state and citizens with the best and most cost-effective technology solutions.

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