

Rep. Sloan Participates in FCC Advisory Committee

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated as a member of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Intergovernmental Affairs Committee (IAC). The IAC is comprised of two state legislators, two tribal, seven local government, and one Governor's representatives. Members provide advice to the FCC Commissioners and staff on telecommunications issues that impact residents across the country.

IAC members received briefings by FCC staff on programs to accelerate broadband (high speed Internet) deployment by improving wireless siting policies, E-Rate modernization to expand resources to schools and libraries, transitioning from traditional copper wire telephone systems to Internet-based systems, and an update on the redesign of the FCC's consumer complaint system. The FCC staff reported that many of the IAC's policy recommendations made in 2012-13 were incorporated in the wireless facilities siting order.

Rep. Sloan reported on filings he has made on two FCC dockets on behalf of Kansas telecommunications customers. "I recommended to the Commissioners that they tie minimum broadband service speeds that are often provided in rural and lower income areas to those provided in higher population density areas," said Sloan. "The digital divide is the difference between urban and rural services, it is important that all Kansans have as equal as possible opportunities for economic success, access to e-government and health care services, and children have educational opportunities."

Sloan also filed comments supporting net neutrality and recognizing that municipal broadband systems are often built in response to failures in the marketplace to meet customer expectations in terms of service, price, and speeds.

Sloan is a member of the IAC's E-Rate Reform subcommittee that will draft comments supporting increases in funding to rural and high-density schools and libraries and increasing the flexibility in making last mile connections. "I am stressing to Commissioners that one-time investment assistance to improve connectivity is more cost-effective than continuing to support high cost, legacy infrastructure-based services," Sloan said. "I also am a member of the Municipal Broadband subcommittee and am emphasizing that governments respond to customer demands for Internet availability and improved performance standards when the private sector providers fail to meet customer expectations."

Rep. Sloan also is a member of the Technology Transition subcommittee that is examining, and will make recommendations to the Commission, on what problems customers may experience as telecommunications companies transition from copper wires to Internet-based systems.

"My participation with the IAC and FCC benefits Kansans by focusing attention on issues that directly impact us," Sloan said. "The Commission hears from telecommunications providers and their national organizations on a regular basis, I bring both the interests of Kansas customers and their local providers to the Commissioners."

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