

Rep. Tom Sloan (R, Lawrence) participated in the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Intergovernmental Affairs Committee's (IAC) recent meeting. The IAC is comprised of local, state, and tribal officials and provides counsel to the FCC Commissioners on communications policies that are being considered by the FCC. Rep. Sloan is the only state legislator who was appointed for a second term on the IAC.

"Three FCC Commissioners met with us to discuss their and our concerns about such topics as the deployment of high speed Internet service to rural areas, competition between broadband providers, benefits to society and individuals with access to broadband services in their homes, locations of wireless relay towers, and local versus federal control over their siting," said Sloan. "The discussions were lively as the IAC members provided perspectives about competition being beneficial, but more important is that all Americans have at least one true high speed Internet provider."

One of the Commissioners noted that Kansans had an opportunity to comment on the FCC's policies related to transitioning from legacy copper wire (plain old telephone service) to next generation Internet-based communications systems because IAC members Rep. Sloan and Lenexa Councilman Andy Huckaba held a hearing in Topeka on the subject and then communicated the results to the Commissioners.

"I commented that the FCC has several applications for telecommunications providers to merge and that such applications provide the Commission opportunities to advance public policies by requiring the broadband providers to integrate various technologies (e.g., fixed-base wireless and cable fiber; satellite and fiber) to expand the number of Americans who can receive high speed Internet services at their homes" said Sloan. "I also commented that increasing the minimum speeds that must be provided by broadband service companies is important."

Whether people want to stream movie, Skype with family members or sell cattle over the Internet, the quality of service is dependent on access and speed. Ten megabits per second bi-directionally should be the minimum speed required by the FCC.

The IAC meets quarterly and Rep. Sloan pays his own expenses to participate.

Rep. Sloan is Chairman of the Kansas House of Representative's Vision 2020 Committee, and a member of the Agriculture & Natural Resources and Transportation Committees. He serves on two U.S. Department of Energy advisory committees and energy and environment committees of the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Council of State Governments.

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