

I live in a small rural community served (served is definitely NOT the correct word but I'll use it in this instance) by SBC. We have no access to DSL and won't for the foreseeable future, while I realize there are several small towns like mine that don't have DSL yet, ALL of the small towns in my county DO have DSL because they are served by rural telephone coops. Will SBC allow these coops to come in and serve my small community? NO! We have no other affordable option for local dial tone, long distance or high speed internet due to the mega corporation mentality of SBC. If and when we can get affordable high speed internet via any other means (satellite or wireless) rest assured this consumer will be taking his business elsewhere. The only bad thing is that SBC "owns" our only "local" prefix which means going with VOIP or cellular only options are limited due to incoming calls being considered "long distance" for example if my daughter is at the swimming pool and a storm comes up, she can't call myself or her mother to pick her up without calling long distance. You folks at the FCC have really messed things up allowing the mega media mergers (AOL-Time-Warner-Turner etc.) and now is the time to put your foot down and stop this nonsense and hardships you have caused for the American consumer that you are ultimately responsible for. YOU should truly be ashamed as I recently read that "the United States dropped from fourth place in 2001 to 12th place in 2004" in "broadband penetration"! In the United States, the incumbent Regional Bell Operating Companies (RBOCs) fought the unbundling with tooth and nail. They stopped investing in telecommunications infrastructure and employed lawyers and lobby groups to fight the legislation. The 1996 Telecommunications Act gradually unraveled and by mid-2003, had effectively been overturned. The RBOC resistance to unbundling was a scorched earth policy. It put U.S. broadband infrastructure development !

into stasis while Asian and European countries were developing their infrastructure. Originally at the forefront of the Internet revolution, the United States now trails Korea, Japan, Canada and eight European countries. The RBOC's themselves lost over half of the US broadband market to their competitors. Are these the types of organizations Americans want to have complete control over the wired infrastructures and cellular airwaves? I THINK NOT! Big Bell companies are blocking access to their networks and stopping competition before it can even begin for local, long-distance, the Internet, cell phone services, and new technologies like making calls over the Internet. If these mergers go through, only two companies will control 90 percent of the consumer market. These mergers would put the interests of large corporations over the interests of individual consumers, and you have a duty to block them. In a world of increased competition, consumers could be enjoying unlimited local and long-distance telephone calls, as well as high-speed Internet access, for just \$40 -- \$15 for community Internet and \$25 for unlimited phone calls over the Internet. But today, this costs about \$90 more than double the price! The FCC should block these mergers and find new ways to bring down the costs of these services, particularly high-speed Internet which has become essential to modern life and is the gateway to exciting new technologies, like making phone calls on the Internet and streaming in video over the Internet. America is falling behind the rest of the world in broadband deployment. We are now 16th, far behind countries like Japan and Korea, which have opened up the building blocks of broadband phone and cable lines to

competitors. This merger would only worsen these problems and therefore must be blocked. They would stifle competition, raise prices, and lead to fewer choices, making the problem worse, not better.