

» ¿What has become apparent is that granting local telephone and cable operators a monopoly on their respective utilities and subsidizing those utilities with taxpayer money is not working. Excuse after excuse is given for data rates remaining low and rural area remaining uncovered. If maintaining these utilities is such a huge financial burden, perhaps telephone and cable operators would be interested in giving maintenance of those utilities back to the public.

Of course, the only thing that scares these companies more than losing public tax dollars for utilities they don't maintain and expand very well is opening the door for competition. In most municipalities, residents only have two choices for broadband access – local telephone company or local cable company. Even in municipalities where competition exists, one company is often solely responsible for the utility, and has every financial incentive to screw the competition.

The goal of guaranteeing that every citizen of this nation has broadband access is at odds with the capitalistic free market. While we pride ourselves in our capitalism, we know it has its shortcomings. Historically, our government has stepped in when the principles of capitalism have clashed with our principles of human decency and proficiency. Our government stepped in when our laborers were being abused. Our government stepped in and granted monopolies to utility companies when it was realized that multiple utility lines for any particular utility was not proficient. And now that our current system has failed to provide our entire citizenry with the utilities we wanted them to have by now, it's time to come up with a new system.

In closing, I'd like to point out that while I do enjoy broadband access in my neighborhood it is only through a duopoly. Armstrong Cable and Embarq (Sprint) have been granted monopolies on their respective utilities. Their service speeds increase at a glacial pace due to the lack of competition, and their prices remain astronomical when compared to the rates of other internet-savvy countries like Japan. Thankfully they have not, to my knowledge, enacted measures like throttling and bandwidth caps that Comcast, Time Warner, and other broadband companies have started practicing. Then again, due to the lack of competition, there is no guarantee that one company will not start throttling and/or capping if the other starts.