



South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus

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May 29, 2014

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Dear Commissioner Mignon Clyburn:

As Chair of SC Legislative Black Caucus, I work with my colleagues to ensure that the people we represent, especially members of minority and low-income communities, can take advantage of vital services that enhance their lives and improve their well-being. Broadband is a critical tool in this state and around the country that increasingly provides access to government services, helps people find and apply for jobs, improves educational outcomes, and provides healthcare services to people in rural communities.

Just as the benefits of broadband can be truly life altering, so too is the lack of access to the services it enables individuals to get ahead and improve their lives. A future without broadband is no future at all, which is why we grow increasingly concerned about the chatter around Washington, D.C., that broadband should be reclassified and regulated as a Title II telecommunications service.

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Tom Wheeler has rightly proposed a middle-ground approach for ensuring an open Internet that balances consumer protection with continued innovation and investment in broadband networks. Expanding and maintaining broadband networks that meet constantly growing consumer demand is a key component to a healthy South Carolina economy.

Since 1999, the private sector has invested \$1.2 trillion in providing both wired and wireless broadband to 99 percent of Americans. This is the kind of investment we want to see continued – especially here in South Carolina – to help transition America into a fully digital economy. Investment and innovation is at risk if the FCC reclassifies broadband under Title II of the Communications Act. Reclassifying broadband under Title II would treat these services as common carriers, which would be a complete reversal in decade's long communications policy.

Absent adequate investment, we limit the possibilities of having meaningful broadband adoption occur in this state, and our residents (our constituents) would lose out. We should not gamble with the future and risk people's lives and livelihoods. Chairman Wheeler's approach promotes the public interest and ensures that investment and innovation can continue to thrive in the broadband sector. We urge you to work with your fellow commissioners to find common ground and not resort to applying old 1930's rotary phone regulations to the vibrant Internet we enjoy today.

Sincerely,

Rep. Harold Mitchell, Jr.
Chairman

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CC: Adonis Hoffman (Chief of Staff and Media Legal Advisor)