

HCS HB 338 -- TELECOMMUNICATIONS

SPONSOR: Pollock

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass by consent" by the Committee on Utilities by a vote of 23 to 0.

This substitute specifies that a telecommunications company will not be required to comply with rules established by the Missouri Public Service Commission which include provisions already mandated by the Federal Communications Commission, including federal rules related to customer propriety network information; slamming and cramming; and rules relating to the installation, provision, or termination of retail services.

A telecommunication company cannot be required to file with the Missouri Public Service Commission any tariffs or schedules of rates, rentals, or service charges for residential and business retail services sold to end user customers but must publish generally available retail prices for those services on a publicly accessible web site.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2012, FY 2013, and FY 2014.

PROPOSERS: Supporters of the bill say that it avoids the regulation of telecommunications companies by both state and federal laws by specifying that they are to be regulated by only the Federal Communications Commission. The bill also allows for the removal of some tariff procedures in favor of the typical free-market contractual agreements between utilities and customers and removes antiquated rules applying to different types of communications technology for no apparent reason. It is more efficient to have uniform rules for all types of telecommunications technology.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Pollock; and AT&T, Incorporated and Affiliates.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill say that it may result in rate increases in areas with small telecommunications companies which are not competitive and heavily regulated. Since some telecommunications companies receive a state-backed monopoly, it is necessary to ensure that customers have protection from price increases.

Testifying against the bill was Consumers Council of Missouri.