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SOUTHEASTERN STATE UTILITY COMMISSIONERS CHALLENGE
TELECOMMUNICATIONS LEGISLATION NOW BEFORE
THE UNITED STATES SENATE

State utility commissioners with the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC) expressed serious concerns with the latest version of telecommunications legislation pending before the United States Senate Commerce Committee because it would eliminate scores of State consumer protections for wireless consumers.

“Consumers will lose out if the wireless provisions in this bill ever become law,” said Daryl Bassett, President of SEARUC and a Commissioner of the Arkansas Public Service Commission. “People rely on wireless as a telephone service and it’s not enough to say “call Washington, DC” when people have serious complaints and frustrations – but that’s what this bill would do,” he said.

HR 5252, the “Communications, Consumers’ Opportunity and Broadband Deployment Act,” is a 157 page bill addressing every facet of communications law, but until Friday night, June 17, it did not interfere with consumer protections for wireless carriers. The new draft would eliminate all State jurisdiction over “terms and conditions of service” for wireless carriers. States would only be able to act if a wireless carrier engaged in behavior that rose to the level of fraud and deceptive trade practices. All other protections that other telephone companies normally comply with would be eliminated when it came to wireless.

SEARUC represents State commissioners in 10 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: