

STATE OF KANSAS

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February 3, 2016

Senator Rob Olson
Chairman, Utilities Committee
Kansas Senate
Topeka, KS

Senator Olson,

Thank you for allowing me to tell my experience regarding independent Telcos.

I live outside of Arkansas City, and on the edge of the AT&T service area. AT&T has serviced our landline ever since the breakup of Ma Bell. They have done a good job with the land line.

However, with the advent of the internet, living in a rural area does not offer all the advantages that one might like. For years, all we could get was dial-up service. That was at the same time that customers living in the towns and cities had much higher speed options.

A few years ago, fiber was trenched into the ground by AT&T right in my front yard. Unfortunately, it was a cross country line going from Arkansas City to points north. They were not allowing connections, in spite of it being in my yard.

I mentioned that I live on the edge of the AT&T service area. One mile west is the Kan-Okla Networks Wireline service area. A couple years ago, they installed fiber to the door of every Kan-Okla customer. I then called AT&T to inquire about the likelihood of getting AT&T fiber to my house. I was told that fiber service for rural customers was not likely to occur anytime soon, and in fact, it may be decades down the road.

I suggested that if AT&T was not going to install fiber in this part of their territory, perhaps they would surrender this territory to Kan-Okla. They said that was unlikely.

I now have wireless internet service at my house. While it is considerably better than dial-up, it doesn't have the capacity or reliability of fiber.

It would be nice to find some way for more rural customers to obtain fiber internet service that many of the independent telcos provide, and for which I would sign up, if I had the ability to do so.

Independent Telcos provide an important service to rural and to very small towns. Without the KUSF, the ability of people outside of the metro areas to have high speed options would decline precipitously.

I support SB 346.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve E. Abrams". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "S" and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Steve E. Abrams