

The Free State Foundation

A Free Market Think Tank For Maryland...Because Ideas Matter

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FSF President Randolph May Praises Deregulatory VoIP Bills in Maryland Testimony

Randolph J. May, President of The Free State Foundation testified yesterday before the Senate Finance Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee of the Maryland General Assembly on identical bills which deny the Maryland Public Service Commission jurisdiction to regulate VoIP and other Internet-Protocol services. In his testimony, which may be read in full [here](#), May stated: “SB 864 and HB 1379 are simple but nevertheless very important bills. In essence, they make clear that the Maryland Public Service Commission has no jurisdiction to regulate Voice over Internet Protocol (“VoIP”) and other Internet Protocol-enabled (“IP-enabled”) services. This is a forward-looking, deregulatory approach which constitutes sound policy as well as sound law. Passage of these bills will help establish Maryland as a state with a regulatory climate that is conducive to the development, promotion, and growth of new broadband and Internet-related technologies and businesses.”

In his testimony, May also made the following points:

- “In light of the technologically dynamic and competitive environment that already exists for broadband services, including the VoIP and other IP-enabled services that are the subject of these bills, assertion of PSC jurisdiction over these broadband services would be unnecessary and counterproductive. Marketplace competition, rather than traditional public utility regulation, will ensure that Maryland’s consumers are protected and receive the highest quality services at the lowest prices. PSC regulation would stifle the investment and innovation which leads to even more vigorous competition.”
- “Enactment of these bills will ensure there is no conflict with the well-established federal policy favoring a minimally regulated environment for broadband Internet services. By removing uncertainty by stating clearly now that the PSC lacks jurisdiction over such services, the bills avoid time-consuming, costly federal-state conflicts in which resources would be simply wasted in fruitless litigation the state almost certainly would lose. These resources can be put to use much more productive use by the state, broadband providers, and consumers.”

The full testimony may be accessed [here](#).

Randolph J. May, President of The Free State Foundation, is a nationally recognized expert in communications and Internet law and policy. He is the author of more than a hundred scholarly articles and essays on communications law and policy, and he is co-editor of two books on communications law and policy.

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